THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

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Inside

Yom Kippur means life for this Holocaust survivor

In 1942, Helen Drazek Wajs' father escaped certain death in the Warsaw Ghetto. Her new book tells her family's story. **PAGE 12**

Nathan Jacobson on brush with U.S. justice

Businessman speaks to *The CJN* after guilty plea was overturned. **PAGE 14**

Yom Kippur

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:33 p.m.	7:34 p.m.
Montreal	6:12 p.m.	7:13 p.m.
Toronto	6:37p.m.	7:38 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:44 p.m.	7:49 p.m.
Calgary	6:51 p.m.	7:57 p.m.
Vancouver	6:28 p.m.	7:32 p.m.

From trauma to triumph

Ilana felt like her life had no value at all. Then she found the help she desperately needed in the Jewish community. Her story, in her own words, **PAGE 8**.

The lesson of forgiveness

Mark Sakamoto explains how his grandparents refused to pass on to their children the wrongs committed against them. **PAGE 10**

Kosher Montreal bagels in Niagara?

Stay-at-home mom runs business out of St. Catharines shul. **PAGE 25**

Creating a Torah stitch by stitch

Volunteers from around the world collaborate to create scroll. **PAGE 38**

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Former Israeli president seeks work, and Leonard Cohen lights up

Looking for a few good spooks

If you think you've got what it takes to spy for Israel, the Mossad is hiring. The secretive intelligence agency has launched a new website and YouTube channel to recruit for various positions in operations, intelligence, technology and administration. In addition to Hebrew, the site, which went online Sept. 22, is available in several languages, including Russian, English, Arabic and French. A questionnaire to determine suitability for the agency can be submitted online, while the YouTube channel offers a handful of well-produced short videos with actors depicting operatives and touting the benefits of the job

Peres pumping petrol?

Former Israeli president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres can add another item to his long resume: viral video sensation. The elder statesmen, 91, released a tongue-in-cheek video last week in which he cleans out his office and is told by an employment counsellor that he has no marketable skills, then tries his hand at being a gas pump attendant, mall security guard, pizza deliveryman, stand-up comedian – "Shimmy P" – and parachute jump instructor. Along the way, Peres gets to impart nuggets of wisdom such as, "If you keep refusing every offer you receive, you'll pay a hefty price," "Nanotechnology is the future," and "When there's nothing, you can do anything." The video – made by his granddaughter, Mica Almog – had more than 280,000 views by Erev Rosh Hashanah.

If anyone deserves a big tip, it's him.
YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Forget sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll

Canadian poet and singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen celebrated turning 80 by releasing a new album and announcing that he plans to start smoking again, a habit he quit some 30 years ago. "Quite seriously, does anyone know where you can buy a Turkish or Greek cigarette?" he asked reporters at a press event in New York earlier this month. "I'm looking forward to that first smoke. I've been thinking about that for 30 years. It's one of the few consistent strings of thoughts I've been able to locate." ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

8.9 million

The population of Israel on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, a two per cent increase over a year ago at the same time.

1,043

The number of shofar blowers who came together Sept. 21 in Whippany, N.J., to set the Guinness World Record for most shofars blown at once, beating the previous record of 796, set in 2006.

Quotable

I often wondered: how did they do it?

—Mark Sakamoto on how his Japanese-Canadian grandparents didn't harbour resentment for being interned in Alberta during World War II. See column on page 10.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Paul Estrin writes that with Tashlich comes tshuvah.

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Letters to the Editor

Learning from Chabad

The column "Learn from Chabad" (Sept. 11) struck a chord with me.

As a child, I was brought up in a Christian household with Protestant and Roman Catholic parents. Church services were an hour in length, starting Saturday evening with three additional services offered on a Sunday.

Religious instruction, either after school or on weekends, was one to two hours long. For holiday services, one did not have to pay a fee per person to attend.

As an adult, I converted to Judaism. The fees for this process were quite high. Services on Shabbat are too long and are only offered at one time, and most are not kid-friendly.

To encourage the younger generation and include young families, family-friendly services are needed, shorter services are needed and one should be able to choose between more than one service on a Friday night or Shabbat morning. Woman-friendly would be great, too.

I have yet to come across a shul that offers all this. As I converted Conservative, I should not have to seek a Reform or Reconstructionist shul to access religious instruction or spiritual guidance.

Shuls need to change with the times. Those who want a more traditional experience will most likely turn to the Orthodox institutions.

I think this article should encourage Jews who are not rabbis or religious leaders to comment too, to see what younger Jews think should change.

Vikki Brewster
Montreal

Not in our backyards

It is ironic to have read "Toronto Jews look north" (Sept. 18) about the discrimination within Toronto neighbourhoods toward the Jewish community in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s and the current controversy over a Muslim development complex proposed for the Thornhill Woods suburb ("Vaughan Council rejects Muslim housing development," Sept. 18).

One presumes that Vaughan City Council and the Preserve Thornhill Woods Association rejected the application of the Muslim housing development because the initial proposal violated city zoning bylaws, especially the suggested building of low-rent apartment housing. Indeed, it is understood that such a proposition devalues the current upscale real estate surroundings.

On the other hand, the Vaughan municipality permitted more than a dozen highrises, along with vast retail spaces, just a few minutes drive south of this area considered for development, creating high traffic and a densely populated neighbourhood.

Therefore, it is in the interests of both the Jewish and Muslim communities to establish a mutually beneficial environmentally friendly neighbourhood.

Smadar Meiri
Thornhill, Ont.

A question of priorities

The Sharp family is to be commended for proposing a Jewish museum (Sept. 18).

If there are funds available in the community for this project, then perhaps some of the money to be raised could be allocated to provide for additional spaces at Baycrest for seniors who value kashrut and need the type of treatment and care Baycrest can provide but who lack the funds to get into Baycrest.

Funds could also be allocated to provide kosher meals for Jewish seniors in Ontario's long-term care homes.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto should take leading roles in ensuring these changes take place.

Charles Abshez
Toronto

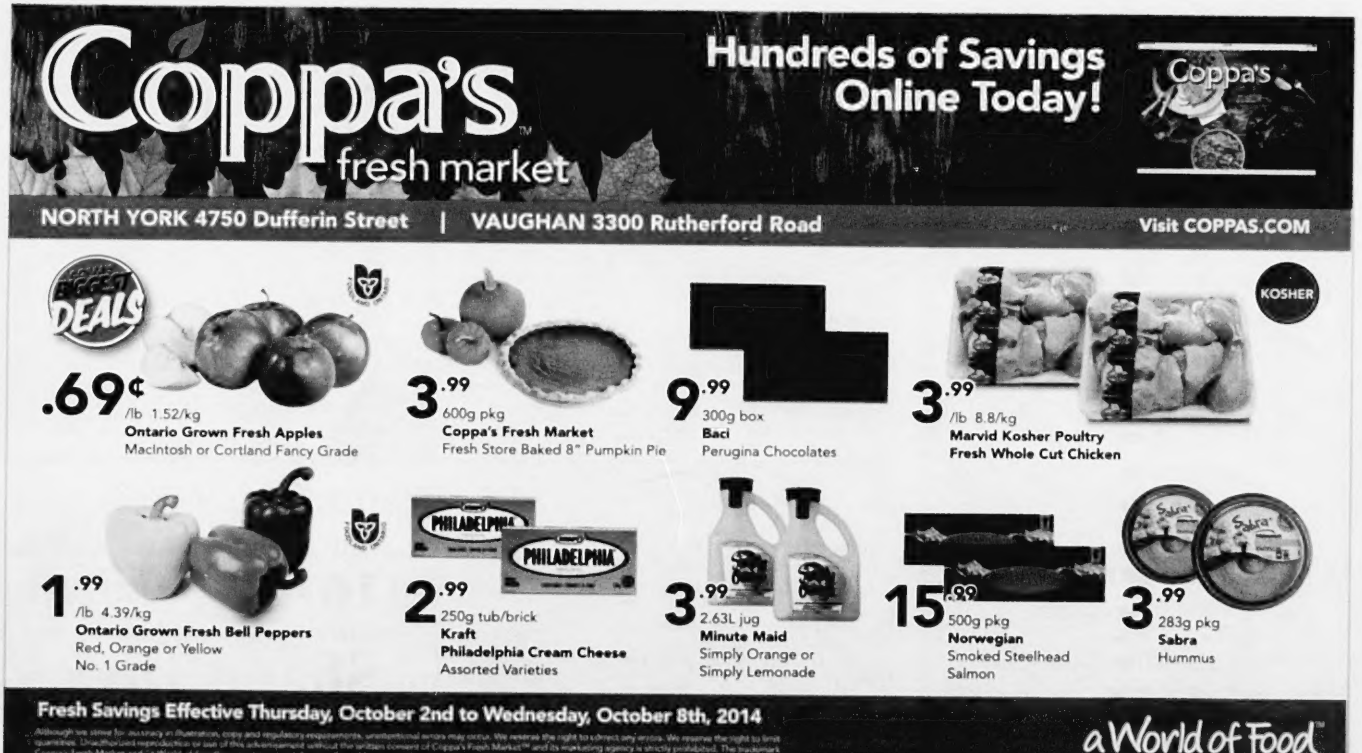
Keep the cards

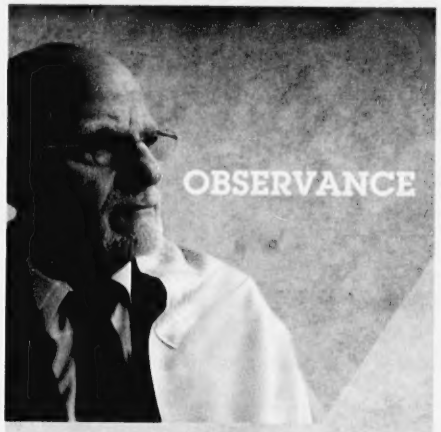
It is debatable whether members of Parliament should send greeting cards for Christmas or Rosh Hashanah to their constituents. But I was taken aback when I received three identical Shanah Tovah cards in the same day from Mark Adler, all sent through the free postal service available for MPs.

I randomly surveyed three neighbours: they had received two, four and seven (!) such cards from our MP. There are better uses of taxpayer dollars.

Martin Lockshin
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*





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Welcoming the unaffiliated

With so many non-members coming to shul on the High Holidays, it's a challenge to make them feel at home and forge meaningful connections

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: The High Holidays are the time that most of our congregants are with us. It's also the time that the most unaffiliated Jews turn up at our doors. They may not want to be members, but they want to come in.

In the best tradition of Abraham and Sarah, our instinct is always to welcome people. At the same time, most of our synagogues depend on the traditional membership model. It is our members who pay their dues and contribute to our campaigns who make sure there are services for everyone else. How can we sustain our sacred institutions while being responsive to those who haven't officially opted in?

Rabbi Korobkin: Of all the issues facing synagogue management, this is one of the thorniest. Every year on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah, I make the following announcement to our "regulars": "Kindly remember that you have been 'deputized' to act as the ambassadors of our congregation, to greet the newcomers and make them feel welcome. If you see someone who looks out of place, please approach them with a prayer book and a smile."

I also relate what I once read about a large church that had cards printed with the following text: "Notice to Visitors: People who attend St. Mark's regularly are for the most part kind and friendly people, but they tend to be a bit shy and self-conscious with strangers. They are afraid of greeting people they think are new and discovering that the 'visitors' have been attending St. Mark's for years. So please help. Identify yourself to the people nearest you and ask them to tell you about our church."

"Notice to St. Mark's Members: Please do your best to make everyone feel welcome. Always introduce yourself to the people sitting near you if you don't know their names. To avoid the embarrassment of mistaking a longtime member for a visitor, use the following ploy: 'Good morning. My name is _____. I've been coming to St. Mark's for _____ (years/weeks). How about you?'"

I very much believe in empowering our members to become stakeholders in our shul's warmth and inviting feel. It also strengthens our members' feeling of belonging.

Rabbi Grushcow: There is another question here, which is how to make sure even our "regulars" feel connected. In Ron Wolfson's book, *Relational Judaism*, he describes a woman who left a congregation after 20 years because, in her words, "I came to everything, and I never met anybody." Part of our raison d'etre as a synagogue is to be a place where people can make meaningful connections and know that they are not alone.

I was speaking recently with a congregant from my previous congregation in New York City. She asked me the difference between what I did there and what I do here in Montreal.

"Here," I told her, "I worry about the leaks in the roof."

"That sounds terrible!" she replied.

"No," I said, "it's wonderful. It means I get to help shape the conversation about every aspect of the experience of the people who come through our doors." If you are sitting in services and the rain drips down on your head, you don't feel welcome. If you are coming in with a walker or a wheelchair and can't enter the building, you don't feel welcome. And if you make it in and you're dry and comfortable but no one says a word to you, you don't feel welcome, either.

Rabbi Korobkin: There's an ironic paradox: the larger the congregation and the more choices available for making friends, the harder it sometimes is to break into an established social circle. In a large shul like ours, we work hard to create a sense of family and warmth despite the largeness. Every Yom Kippur after *Kol Nidrei*, we break for five minutes to allow every person to meet the person next to them so as to generate or renew friendships. This helps both on the spiritual and prosaic levels.

The Torah repeatedly emphasizes the need to welcome the stranger. It's certainly only logical to do this when that "stranger," after being welcomed properly, may eventually emerge as the next leader of our community. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | On Yom Kippur

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Men and women walk along a Toronto street during Yom Kippur, circa 1910.

SeeJN | Onley comes full circle

Israeli Consul General in Toronto DJ Schneeweiss, left, and outgoing Lt.-Gov. David Onley are pictured after Onley's last official meeting in office on Sept. 22. Onley's first official meeting as lieutenant governor in September 2007 was with then-Israeli consul general Cobie Brosh. Elizabeth Dowdeswell was sworn in as Ontario's new lieutenant governor Sept. 23.

From Yoni's Desk

The beauty and the burden

The first two Days of Awe seemed to weigh more heavily at my synagogue this year. On Rosh Hashanah, the fatigue in the sanctuary was palpable, the congregational singing less vigorous. There were even a few more empty seats than usual. I wasn't the only one to notice that people seemed weary.

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the seven days in between are a time of intensity. Such is the beauty, and the burden, of this span that we need an entire year to recover – any more than 10 days might be too much to handle. And yet, as 5775 dawned, it felt as though the past few months have been an extended version of the Days of Awe. If some were finding it hard to get across the finish line, who could blame them?

The kidnapping and violent murder of Naftali Frenkel, Gilad Shaar, and Eyal Yifrach in June shocked the Jewish world. The blanket of rockets that subsequently fell across Israel exacerbated the trauma, as did the IDF's Operation Protective Edge, which had families wondering whether they would ever see their sons and daughters return alive from Gaza's terrorist dystopia. Sixty-six never did. By the end of the summer, more than 2,000 had died in the conflict.

The agony in Israel and Gaza was compounded by events in Europe. The summer of anti-Semitism began May 24 when a gunman killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels and continued with anti-Israel demonstrations across the continent. As the war raged, the attacks against Jews outside Israel increased in volume and ferocity. Europe's Jews felt as though they were under siege, and in Paris in July, they literally were trapped inside a synagogue as thugs threw stones and bricks at them.

When the war ended in August, so, too, did the demonstrations in Europe. As the new year approached, it appeared there might be some respite for Jews around the world, a chance for us to catch our collective breath. But then, on Friday, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas stepped up to the dais at the United Nations in New York and accused Israel of genocide and a "most abhorrent form of apartheid." And so 5775 appeared to begin much as 5774 ended, with malicious and fabricated claims against Israel.

As the Days of Awe continue, culminating Saturday with Yom Kippur, the threat to Israel and the Jewish Diaspora is impossible to ignore. The physical and mental stresses of this summer have taken their toll. But it's important to remember that existential anxiety is only part of what this season is about. The Days of Awe also present a call for renewal, and an opportunity to honour and celebrate community.

In that spirit, this week's edition of *The CJN* features a healthy dose of optimism. There's the dramatic story of a Jewish woman who survived poverty and abuse with the help of her community (see cover story, page 8), and a powerful essay by author Mark Sakamoto on the importance of forgiveness (see page 10). Here's hoping 5775 is filled with more of these positive messages, and fewer of the kind that marred 5774. ■ — YONI

YOM KIPPUR WAR

A battalion physician's personal reflections

Itzhak Brook

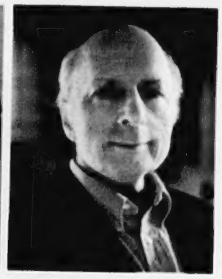
The Yom Kippur War was launched as a surprise attack on Israel by Syria and Egypt on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar 41 years ago. This was the most serious threat to the existence of the Jewish state in modern history.

Even though Israel eventually prevailed militarily, it paid a steep price, both in lives lost and in the citizens' confidence in their leaders and themselves. Almost 3,000 soldiers gave their lives and more than 10,000 were wounded in the 17 days of fighting. Almost every household and neighbourhood was affected. The pain and sorrow were and still are searing. Deep within the psyche of the nation, this conflict shattered conventional wisdom that the country was invincible.

I served as a physician of a reserve supply battalion that was tasked with providing an armoured corps division in the Sinai Desert with ammunition, fuel, water and food. My battalion's soldiers repeatedly risked their lives, replenishing tanks under enemy fire. They overcame numerous difficulties and hardships, performed their mission despite constant danger, and many of them paid the ultimate price. It was a daily struggle for survival, requiring resourcefulness and performance despite constant danger.

In addition to caring for my soldiers' injuries, I unexpectedly realized that helping them to cope with their fear under fire was one of the most difficult problems I faced. Not only did I have to counsel my fellow soldiers, but I had to face and deal with my own anxiety.

The sudden and unexpected circumstances that led to the war and the initial setbacks increased the psychological strain. Within hours, our battalion was thrown into battle, open to direct fire and bombardment. The lack of information ("fog of war"), the suddenness and unpredictability by which injury or death occurred, the inability to eliminate the source of danger by long range artillery or missiles were the most difficult stressors. The realization that this war could have been avoided if we had been mobilized earlier and that the survival of the country was in jeopardy also aggravated the strain. We also realized that information broadcast over the Israeli radio was often misleading and incorrect.



Itzhak Brook during the Yom Kippur War, left, and today.

> *Fear can be one's friend as long as one uses it to be cautious and responsible*

Soldiers under strain came to me for counselling, admitting their fear. Some wanted medication, others wanted to talk, and a few could not cope with the mounting pressure. I felt ill-equipped to deal with these problems. As a reserve medical officer, I was never trained to deal with battle stress. The reason for this lack of training might have been that Israel's previous two wars were short and victorious. No one was prepared for a longer war in which we did not have the initiative. In a "macho" society, as Israel was at that time, it was heresy to admit that one is experiencing fear.

The way I initially dealt with those soldiers was to deny them the right to admit fear. I told them to be tough and strong and to go back to their duties. It did not work, as I seemed to have failed to help most of them.

It gradually dawned on me that I actually shared the same feelings as these individuals. I was as frightened as they were. How could I not feel fear? Shells and missiles were flying in our direction, airplanes were strafing us, and Egyptian commandos were after us. It is natural to be afraid. This was a new revelation for me, to admit that "yes, I am afraid as well."

I also realized that fear can be one's friend as long as one uses it to be cautious and responsible. It also seemed to me that our enemies were probably as afraid as we were and the outcome of the conflict would be decided by those who would be able to perform despite being afraid. Fear could send one running away, make one freeze, or make one charge forward to eliminate the source of the danger.

I started changing my approach when I counselled my soldiers. I told them that I was as afraid as they were. "It is OK to be afraid," I told them. I saw relief in their faces when I admitted my own fear. I told them that they were no less manly by admitting their fear. Then I explained the choices they had in how to cope with their fear, and left it to them to decide how to deal with this. In most cases, a short talk was enough to relieve their burden, and almost all felt able to go back to their duties. A few needed some anti-anxiety medication, and a few had to be evacuated. I found out that not only was I able to help others by legitimizing their fear and taking it "out of the closet," I was able to help myself as well.

Caring for the wounded enemy soldiers we captured was very challenging. I took care of several Egyptian soldiers, providing them with the same level of treatment that I gave my own injured men. While my natural instincts urged me to help them to the best of my ability, I could not deny the feeling of animosity toward the enemy in the heat of battle. I managed to overcome these misgivings, however, in the hope that our captured soldiers would be treated as well as we were treating the Egyptians. Caring for these enemy prisoners of war humanized our adversary to me, and I felt inner satisfaction that I was able to follow the values I was brought up with, about the sanctity of human life.

This war almost brought about the destruction of Israel, but for the bravery of our soldiers. They compensated for the lack of manpower, equipment and supply with improvisation, resourcefulness, courage and determination. These ordinary people became unwilling heroes who saved Israel. This war articulated my personal definition of courage: the performance of one's duty despite one's fear. ■

Dr. Itzhak Brook is a graduate of the Hebrew University School of Medicine, a professor of pediatrics at Georgetown University and the author of the book In the Sands of Sinai – A Physician's Account of the Yom Kippur War.

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From trauma to triumph:

How I survived on less than $100 a month

This week, The CJN opens an investigation into poverty in the Jewish community. In coming editions, we will explore how poverty affects Jews, hear from those who have experienced poverty first-hand and learn about innovative solutions to the poverty crisis.

ILANA GOLDMAN

Most kids don't move out of their home at 15 years old. But, this was my reality.

From that point in my life, my only income was student welfare. The amount I received was only enough to afford rent in grimy basement apartments infested with ants and cockroaches. It was in one of those dark basements that I was severely assaulted when I was 18.

The trauma resulted in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that prevented me from remaining in basements for long periods of time – yet another barrier to finding affordable housing.

I turned to drugs and alcohol. My life was a chaotic mess of overdoses, assaults, stitches and abusive relationships, one of which culminated in a murder attempt. During this dark period, I felt like a walking zombie – like my life had no value. I had zero self-esteem and did not believe that I deserved the help of others.

The only thing I had to look forward to was completing my psychology degree at York University. Working towards a goal made me feel that I was doing something that mattered.

Without a penny from my parents, I struggled financially to the point of eating only what was available at the student food bank and stretching basic necessities. I made toiletries and hygiene products last up to five times their recommended use.

My situation of poverty, past trauma, countless survival challenges and complete isolation from any parental, social or community support, found me living at Jane and Finch, a notorious Toronto neighbourhood, in a narrow, closet-like "bedsitter" with a tiny window for many years, further damaging my mental health.

The room I was living in included the blood-soaked carpeting that was a constant reminder of my last abusive relationship. I was sleeping on a blood and urine-stained mattress, which I remember believing with concrete certainty would become my own deathbed.

"Ilana Goldman" is currently working on her master's degree

I was surviving on less than $100 a month.

Just as I was seriously contemplating suicide, a friend told me about help available in the Jewish community.

I will never forget the day I was given a brand new mattress and some spending money. I remember the movers who helped move me out of my apartment and their uncontrollable gagging from the odour. Looking back, it's hard to believe that that's where I slept for so long.

Silly as it may seem, this new mattress marked a pivotal point in my life. I felt hope, support and the opportunity for renewal. For the first time in my life, I did not feel alone. The support of the Jewish community gave me a sense of belonging that I lacked and had searched for my entire life.

Today, I can afford to live in a safe community because I receive a monthly rent supplement from the Kehilla Rental Assistance Program. When you are poor, this monthly assistance can be life-saving. It minimized my depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms. The stability also enabled me to return to university and pursue a master's degree where I am currently in my second year and maintaining an A-average.

My program has a practicum component, and I use this as my opportunity to give back to the Jewish community that saved me and provided me with the opportunity to function at my full potential. The anonymous donors that saved my life through JF&CS and the Kehilla Residential Program are the foundation of everything it means to be spiritual and united as a Jewish community which I now refer to as my "family."

I am now volunteering as a life coach within the Jewish community. It is here that I try to pass on the mitzvahs that I received to others who are still struggling.

I tell clients to accept unchangeable circumstances and make the best out of the cards they are dealt in life. I was not dealt a very good hand. The Jewish community provided me with the aces, jokers and wild cards I needed to transform myself from a homeless teenager into a productive member of society. ■

Ilana Goldman (not her real name), immigrated to Canada with her family from Israel when she was seven. Today she volunteers as a life coach within the Jewish community to help those at risk. She is a strong advocate for connecting people struggling in similar circumstances to Jewish agencies that can provide help. She can be contacted at trauma2triumph@outlook.com.

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Forgiveness was my grandparents' final gift

Mark Sakamoto

This is the first Yom Kippur since I published my book *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents*. To be sure, I have had – at best – a distant understanding of this holy day. It always sounded rather ominous to me: The Day of Atonement.

I never really understood what it all meant. How – exactly – does one cause a transgression to be forgiven or pardoned?

It took me two years and countless hours of interviewing my own family to come to ground on the central tenet of atonement. It starts, and ends, and starts again with one terribly complicated act: forgiveness. This is what my grandparents taught me. This was their final gift to me. I'm unspeakably grateful I found it in time.

In the spring of 1942, my Grandpa Hideo and Grandma Mitsue Sakamoto, both Canadian-born citizens, were living productive lives in Vancouver. They had several fishing vessels, a nice house, and were deeply rooted in their community. Then their government turned on them. They were cast out of their homes, their province and their lives. They were shipped to southern Alberta and forced to live in a modified chicken coop. They worked day and night on a sugar beet farm for subsistence wages. They spent the summers baking in the heat and the winters freezing to the bone. Their only crime was their ethnicity.

Indeed, dignity was stolen, burdens shouldered and lives lost, both on the battlefield and on the home front of World War II. Despite suffering such cruelties, our family instilled in us a deep sense of respect and understanding, both for ourselves and for others – not by preaching about them, but by living them.

Our grandparents simply refused to pass on to their children the wrongs that were committed against them. This is, above all, the shared legacy they bequeathed to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is one of hope, one of strength. This is what real forgiveness looks like. This is atonement.

I often wondered: how did they do it? How were my grandparents able to let go of those most injurious of years?

This is the shocking thing about forgiveness: it has almost nothing to do with the past. Forgiveness is all about the future. It is the one device we have at our disposal that enables us to look to tomorrow with a brave and hopeful heart. It is the one escape hatch from the devastating yesterdays.

Seen through this light, forgiveness becomes a daily act. It becomes a way of life. Lived in this way, it liberates your heart. And, in this newfound freedom, your soul finds space. To grow. To acknowledge. As our nation's poet, Leonard Cohen, sang, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

And so I'd like to end this piece with a ray of light I uncovered in the darkest of days in my family's history. At the conclusion of World War II, the Canadian government passed legislation that would send every Japanese Canadian – regardless of whether they were born in Canada or not – to the war-ravaged nation of Japan. Darkness reigned here in Canada. There was but one ray of light and it came from the Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto.

Speaking to more than a thousand protestors, Rabbi Abraham Feinberg, solemnly spoke against the bill: "I am here on behalf of six million Jews who were slaughtered… for no reason other than being Jews… The ghost of Hitler still walks in Canada. The thing for which Hitler stood has been inscribed on the order-in-council which punishes little children for crimes they couldn't commit."

It is difficult to overestimate the weight of Rabbi Feinberg's words. Japanese Canadians were thankful for the crack. It let the light in. I am here because of it. It kept my family in Canada.

I wish you an easy fast – and a bright tomorrow. ■

Forgiveness: A Gift from my Grandparents *was a #1 bestseller on the* Globe and Mail's *national list*

The synagogue of Biarritz

Bernie Farber

This past summer was not a particularly good one for the Jews of Europe. The Gaza war heightened tensions and left Jews of France, for example, scared and troubled.

As it turned out, my wife Karyn and I were in France during this time meeting the new mishpachah prior to our daughter's wedding. We were, however, far from the troubled spots around Paris. Our new French family lived in the southwest of the country along the Spanish border by the foothills of the Pyrenees.

Picturesque towns like Cucuron, Monein and Pau dotted the French countryside in this area where quaint vineyards and small farms are aplenty.

The nearest large city is Biarritz, located along the banks of the Atlantic. It is today a tourist mecca where once Napoléon Bonaparte built a lovely palace for his Queen. Today, Lacoste, Alain Figaret and Rolex stores are more the order, although it is rumoured that Vladimir Putin built a small vacation fortress somewhere nearby.

We spent a good few days in Biarritz where our daughter's new family resides. A town of about 75,000 it doubles its population during vacation times. Its spotless and beautifully appointed beaches are full, rain or shine.

On our first day in town Karyn and I decided to reconnoiter the area of town where we were located. Our real goal was to find the beach on our own. As is usually the case when in a strange and unfamiliar place we got thoroughly lost.

As we turned a corner there it was; light blue in construction, tall though nowhere near the size of the Greek Orthodox church across the street, stood the Biarritz synagogue.

There were no gendarmes in front; the gate was unlocked with tables and chairs in the courtyard. And the front door of the synagogue was wide open.

When Jews travel, anything Jewish, especially a synagogue becomes irresistible. We wandered through the front door to be greeted by a young woman who was selling challah and other goods to a few customers preparing for Shabbat.

Introducing ourselves in our pig-Latin French, the young woman smiled broadly and asked, "Are you Canadian?" Turns out Rebbetzin Shayna Melonev was originally from Winnipeg. She and her husband, Reb Mendy, who hailed from Toulouse, was the Chabad couple assigned to the small community of Jewish worshippers in Biarritz.

As we talked and played Jewish geography, we discovered that the rebbetzin had, a number of years ago, lived on our street in Thornhill, Ont., and we knew many people in common. This type of thing happens to us often and continues to reinforce in me that we Jews are indeed a close, if not widespread, family.

The synagogue was originally built in 1902 and had undergone a reconstruction with a new dedication held early in July of this year. There was, as to be expected, a small Jewish population in Biarritz but during vacation months, especially in the summer the synagogue sees 70 to 100 Jewish vacationers from around the world.

While Biarritz was located in Vichy France during the war, the city's Jews fared no better than most. The Nazis murdered virtually the entire pre-war Jewish population. However Biarritz did play a unique and vital role where possibly thousands of Jews were saved.

Given its proximity to the Spanish border, in 1940, then-Portuguese vice-counsel Aristides de Sousa Mendes found himself in this town after being ordered back by his government for signing hundreds of travel documents for fleeing Jewish refugees trying to make it into neutral Spain.

On his journey home, Mendes had a stopover in Biarritz where Jewish refugees, having heard the news of this righteous man, scurried to his train. It was here from his train window that Mendes signed many more travel documents that saved so many lives.

We Jews are a small family. It is such finds as the Biarritz synagogue that continues to be the glue that binds us. ■

Europe's Jews aren't packing their bags yet

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Perhaps even the ominously dark cloud of anti-Semitism in today's Europe has a silver lining: according to recent statistics, a growing number of Jews are coming on aliyah.

Other than for the small number of pioneers, the link between the persecution of Jews and their coming to Eretz Yisrael is as old as Zionism. From the impact of the Dreyfus trial on Herzl, as he observed it as a journalist in Paris, to the tragedy of the Holocaust that some five decades later moved the United Nations to endorse a Jewish state, the persecution of Jews has been a strong factor in the creation of Israel.

Not that the Jews' perennial yearning for Zion was contingent on anti-Judaism, but had they been allowed to enjoy European emancipation as originally envisaged, they would have continued to turn piously to Jerusalem in prayer but not come to live there.

The current surge of anti-Semitism in Europe seems to have been very much on Natan Sharansky's mind when earlier this summer he gave an exclusive interview to the *London Jewish Chronicle* about the future of European Jewry.

Sharansky is the chairman of the Jewish Agency, which seeks to bring Jews to Israel. It has just increased its budget to meet what it hopes to be the new demand from Europe. His ostensibly sober analysis may, therefore, also be motivated by institutional interests.

Its basis is the growing Muslim presence in Europe. Ironically, right-wing extremists who thrive on anti-Semitism have made common cause with radical Muslims and their rabidly anti-Israel agenda. Though neo-Nazis hate Muslims no less than Jews, they're now colluding in their joint effort to eliminate, or at least diminish, the Jewish presence in Europe. Jews are under attack both from those who hate them and from those who want Israel destroyed.

Sharansky urges European Jewry to take the consequences and move to Israel. According to him, only the ultra-Orthodox and those committed to total assimilation will stay. All who want to remain true to their European Jewish roots should come to Israel because Israel has become the bastion of European values. The headline of the interview reads, "European idea will die here and survive in Israel."

The chairman of the Jewish Agency, committed to the integration of all Jews, admits that Israel must try harder to foster religious pluralism. He has been advocating it in the past whether on its intrinsic merits or as a way of appealing to non-Orthodox Jews.

Not everybody agrees. Some feel that modern Israel is being shaped more by America than by Europe. Others see no reason to urge Jews to pack their bags.

Among the latter is Barbara Spectre, an American-born Israeli who now lives in Stockholm, where she founded and directs *Paideia*, which, in partisan fashion, she describes as "Europe's premier institute for adult Jewish education and activism."

In an open letter to Sharansky, also published in the Jewish Chronicle, Spectre argues that European Jewry is there to stay and to thrive. She supports her claim by largely anecdotal evidence from *Paideia* alumni.

I recently spent time in Britain, where I lived for more than a quarter-of-a-century before coming to Canada, and in Sweden, where I grew up. Though the worry about the growth of anti-Semitism is widespread and is reflected both in statements by politicians and in reports in the non-Jewish media, the Jews I spoke to didn't seem to have been personally affected. Despite Jewish Agency statistics, I saw no evidence of people packing their bags.

Critics have observed that, like in the 1930s, Europe's Jews are again burying their heads in the sand instead of facing facts and leaving. Perhaps it's because they know that then Jews had nowhere to go even if they wanted to. Now they'll always be welcome in Israel because it's the state of the Jewish people. Aliyah, therefore, can wait, at least for a while. ■

Confronting Qatar's terror sponsorship

Sheryl Saperia

The shocking brutality of the Islamic State (IS), also referred to as ISIS or ISIL has finally galvanized public and political support for decisive action. But other terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah should not get a free pass while eyes are on IS.

Defeating these groups requires a multi-faceted approach that includes cutting off the flow of funds and fighters. This means confronting the world's state sponsors of terror – even those working diligently to present themselves as Western allies.

Qatar ranks high on this list.

This may seem surprising. After all, Qatar hosts the largest U.S. airbase in the Middle East, as well as several western university campuses, including two Canadian schools: the College of North Atlantic and the University of Calgary nursing school. It owns fashionable stores and soccer teams in European countries, and has sunk millions of dollars into a major U.S. think-tank – presumably to enhance its image in Washington, D.C. policy circles. Combined with an open investment climate, Doha has projected a welcoming, Western-friendly image.

But a 2009 U.S. diplomatic cable casts a pall over this carefully tailored image, describing Qatar as the "worst in the region" on counterterrorism co-operation. Qatar has also funnelled hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas, and is a vociferous supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas' parent organization. The Brotherhood's activities are now being curtailed by the U.K. government after the movement was found to be complicit with armed and extremist groups.

Qatar has provided a safe haven for the Taliban, and at one point paid millions of dollars in bribes to Al Qaeda to prevent an attack on Qatari soil – with utter disregard for how that money would be used to murder innocent civilians elsewhere. Qatar is preparing for joint naval operations with Iran, the world's pre-eminent state sponsor of terrorism. As for IS, it is not yet clear if Qatar has funded this entity directly or has been deliberately lax in preventing fundraising.

It is clearly time for Canada to re-examine its relationship with Qatar.

To its credit, Canada has passed some strong anti-terror legislation, such as the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act (JVTA). The JVTA enables the Canadian government to designate foreign states as sponsors of terror. Once designated, these countries can be sued in Canadian courts for their terrorist involvement.

The JVTA is an ideal tool to incentivize Qatar to curb its support for terrorism. Listing the sheikdom as a state sponsor of terror would make it vulnerable to civil lawsuits by Canadian victims of Hamas and other terrorist groups. The designation would be especially impactful because Doha truly cares about its reputation and position in the West. In fact, mounting pressure has already led Qatar to expel from its territory several senior Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members who had been living there comfortably. The negative public exposure and potentially severe financial consequences resulting from being sued under the JVTA may deter Doha from continuing down its current course.

Additionally, Canada should reject the request by Qatar's media mouthpiece, *Al Jazeera*, for unconditional broadcasting rights on Canadian television. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) was asked earlier this year to remove the condition that television distributors edit out hate speech or images before broadcasting *Al Jazeera* Arabic over Canadian airwaves. This stipulation should not be removed unless the channel can prove it no longer broadcasts comments that normalize and glorify terrorist violence or that promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, nationality or sexual orientation.

Whether *Al Jazeera* should be aired in Canada goes beyond ordinary issues of free speech. The real question is whether a terror-sponsoring foreign government, which has bragged about its control over the channel's reporting, deserves to have an unencumbered voice in Canada. The answer should be no.

If Canada is truly committed to combating terrorist groups like Islamic State and Hamas, then their patron states must be confronted. Let's start with Qatar. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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A Yom Kippur survival story

Former teacher publishes book on escape from the Warsaw Ghetto

FRANCES KRAFT
Special to The CJN

For as long as she can remember, the holiest day of the Jewish year has held special significance for Helen Drazek Wajs. On the eve of Yom Kippur in 1942, her father, Samuel Drazek, survived a terrifying incident in wartime Poland.

It happened on his way to the Warsaw Ghetto factory where he and his wife Manya worked as slave labourers. Drazek was certain he would be killed when a German officer arrested him and led him to a roundup massacre.

But after a short time – perhaps because Drazek had succeeded in convincing the officer that he was a valuable worker – he was ordered to leave.

"People did not survive these massacres. The fact that my father did is unreal," Drazek Wajs told *The CJN* over coffee in her Toronto apartment. Her father, a traditional but not strictly observant man, vowed to attend Kol Nidrei services for the rest of his life, and despite ill health in later years, he did.

Drazek Wajs is self-publishing a book about her late parents' survival, and her own. The book, *Odyssey Through Hell: Escape from the Warsaw Ghetto*, is expected to be in print soon. Author Anne Dublin, with whom the book was written, added historical context and did part of the editing.

Drazek Wajs, a former school teacher and general studies principal of a Jewish school in Montreal, survived most of the war separately from her parents. Born in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941, she was smuggled out 14 months later via a courthouse with separate entrances for the ghetto and Aryan sides.

Her parents had arranged for a wealthy Christian couple – clients at their prewar haute couture atelier – to look after their daughter. In 1994, Yad Vashem designated rescuers Janina and Leon Nasierowski, who also ended up sheltering Manya and Samuel, as Righteous Among the Nations.

By the time Drazek Wajs was reunited with her parents at age four, they were strangers to her. She was living in a modest cottage in a Polish village, because her rescuers had joined the resistance and been deported to a concentration camp. Although she was treated well, she remembers being hungry and cold, and said she had to wear a coat and hat indoors to keep warm.

To ease their daughter's transition, the Drazeks stayed in the village for several weeks, so she could get to know them before they took her away. They left with a large, heavy crucifix, carrying it everywhere until their daughter was ready to give it up.

Before settling in Montreal in 1952, the small family, who had lost about 100 relatives, lived in Europe and briefly in Israel. A cousin in Belgium had seen their names on a list of survivors, and helped them build a new life there. In Montreal, Samuel and Manya established a fur business, Créations de Paris, which they ran for about 35 years until they closed it to retire.

Samuel, Helen, and Manya Drazek, 1946

Helen Drazek Wajs FRANCES KRAFT PHOTO

Luck played a big part in her parents' survival, Drazek Wajs said. They worked under a German officer who "acted as a real Nazi, but never touched anybody." Samuel had no idea the man was actually Jewish, but felt he could trust him to deliver letters. It wasn't until after the war in Paris that they crossed paths again by chance, a moving reunion described in the book.

Drazek Wajs' stories have an immediacy attributable to the fact that, whenever her parents talked about the war, she wrote their stories down immediately afterward. Without the notes that she compiled over decades, "there's no way I could have reconstituted what happened."

The book honours a promise she made to her parents to remember and tell the world their story. Several years ago, she contributed two poems to an anthology edited by Shlomit Kriger, *Marking Humanity: Stories, Poems & Essays by Holocaust Survivors*.

Drazek Wajs has also taken part in some Holocaust commemorations, mostly in Montreal, where she lived until she and her husband moved here eight years ago to be closer to their children.

Although their grandchildren have participated in the March of the Living, Drazek Wajs said there's no way she could step onto Poland's "blood-soaked" soil.

However, she noted, the courthouse where she was rescued from the Warsaw Ghetto is still standing, and her grandchildren who have been on the March shared her story when they were there.

"I'm represented," she said. ■

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Jewish Toronto mourns the loss of a cherished community leader

David Green z"l was passionate about tzedekah

By Daniel Horowitz

There are leaders, and there are those who lead.

David Green, who passed away on September 9 at Sunnybrook Veterans Centre, led by example; personifying the best of leadership through his innate ability to inspire and motivate those around him.

A Veteran of the Second World War, David, who was born and raised in Toronto's "Junction" area, was a regular at UJA's Lipa Green Centre where he would take to the phones, canvassing donors on behalf of UJA, and share his life stories. And when David Green spoke, people listened.

"David was a special person, whether at a telethon, or at his desk in the Lipa Green, calling people to follow up on their pledges, or looking after arrears, David always had a smile on his face," said David Engel, a long-time UJA volunteer and a Chair of UJA's Annual Campaign in 2000. "He was such a wonderful and positive role model to so many and he felt, very deeply, that canvassing community members for donations to the UJA Campaign was a lifetime responsibility. He will be missed, but his legacy will live on."

One of 10 children, David joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1940, serving in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and was MIA and subsequently a prisoner of war in Belgium. He was the first prisoner to be liberated from Stalag 357, just north of Hanover, and when he returned to Canada, David wasted no time in setting an example of volunteerism and tzedekah to future generations.

In 2003, David explained his uncommon passion for tzedakah and UJA in the Book of Life, The Jewish Foundation's archival collection of stories from those who have left a legacy to ensure the future of Toronto's Jewish community.

"I never really thought much about philanthropy until I came home from serving in Europe in World War II," wrote David. "That experience greatly affected me. I saw some of the horrors of the Holocaust firsthand and realized the importance of building a strong Jewish community."

"My father and my late mom, Sylvia, met on a blind date," says daughter Miriam. "They were together for almost 65 years when she passed away in 2010. Although they had completely different personalities, mom and dad loved each other very much, and had an unbreakable bond. She loved to play mahjong, he was an avid golfer. And their relationship worked; as he became more and more active in the Jewish community and in the business world, she preferred to stay home and take care of the house."

"David Green was a wonderfully kind and compassionate gentleman, and a strong supporter of, and volunteer for the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto," says Ronit Holtzman, VP, Planned Giving & Endowments, Jewish Foundation "David demonstrated his tremendous vision by opening his fund at the Foundation in 1990, making him one of our earliest supporters. Today, the Sylvia and David Green Philanthropic Fund continues to support a myriad of organizations that were near and dear to his heart, including a perpetual gift to UJA's annual campaign."

"David volunteered for UJA for an unbelievable 60 years," says Jeff Springer, UJA Federation's Senior Vice-President, Corporate Affairs. "His passion and belief in community motivated him to contact donors for their support year after year. He was so committed that we had to create an award to recognize him and of course, we called it the Dave Green Award. His visits to my office for a schmooze and a drink are wonderful memories that I will always cherish."

Limmud FSU Canada readies for its inaugural Jewish learning Festival

By Daniel Horowitz -Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Canada became one of the most active centers of former Soviet Jewish immigration, with the GTA being the most popular destination, as some 70 percent of new immigrants chose to settle there. In all, Toronto's Jewish-Russian population has gone from a few thousand in the 1970s to roughly 60,000 today.

With those numbers in mind, Limmud FSU Canada, a Jewish non-profit volunteer-driven organization passionate about learning, community building and Jewish continuity, is preparing to spread its message to all members of the country's Russian-speaking Jewish community.

Originating in Moscow, Russia 8 years ago, Limmud FSU is built on a unique model of seminars, lectures, workshops and discussions focusing on an eclectic range of topics.

Supported by Limmud FSU International, United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto, the Jewish Foundation of Montreal and private donations, Limmud FSU Canada - a growing force in the world of informal Jewish education – is gearing up for its first Canadian Educational Conference dubbed "Kultura", being held at Deerhurst Resort in Muskoka, Ontario, from October 24th to 26th, and organizers hope that it will attract Russian-speaking Jews from across the country.

"Amongst today's young Russian-speaking Jewish adults in Canada, there is a growing interest and involvement with Jewish communal life, Israeli advocacy, volunteerism, and expression of their Jewish identity," says Lorne Goldstein, Governing Council Member, Limmud FSU Canada. "We need to support Limmud FSU Canada's efforts to engage young Jewish adults of Russian-speaking background, and it is imperative for us to support the Kultura Conference - the first in Canada - with participants coming from across Canada, the US and Israel."

For Leon Martynenko, Co-Chair, Limmud FSU Canada, Kultura is a celebration of Jewish Russians' unique identity and cultural heritage. Leon represents a 25 member organizing committee that is working relentlessly on planning Kultura. Together with Karina Rondberg, he is co-chairing the conference. Galina Sandler is the Chair of the Governing Council. Mila Voihanski is Limmud FSU Canada Country Director.

"Our community of Jews from the FSU is one of the more diverse of the sub-groups of the general Jewish population in Canada," says Martyneko. "Among us you can find Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, secular, traditionalists and very observant Jews, people who speak different languages, people who arrived in Canada over 40 years ago, and those who came here very recently, there are also many Israelis in our community. Yet, despite the multiple differences, we all share cultural elements that unite us."

"For many years, UJA Federation has been investing in deepening the interconnectivity between our locally-born community and the Russian speaking Jewish community that has been arriving in the GTA over the last few decades," says Adam Minsky, Senior Vice President, Community Capacity Building, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "We have invested heavily in leadership development programs, and the leaders who have emerged came to us with this proposal to stage the largest residential Jewish learning festival that the city has ever seen. For me, it's a particular point of pride that the Russian-Jewish community is, through UJA Federation, and led by the leaders we helped to develop, and this segment of our community, at the forefront of putting on a Jewish learning festival for the entire community."

Limmud FSU Canada is about the journey – the process and not just the conference, and that journey is already off to a fine start.

To register for the LIMMUD FSU KULTURA FESTIVAL, visit limmudfsucanada.org/kultura-2014-registration/
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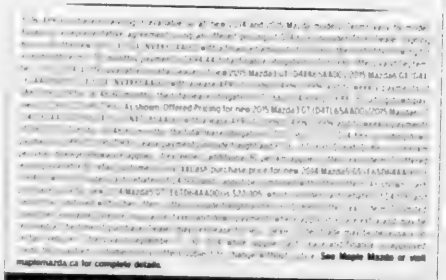

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Jacobson exonerated in U.S. of money laundering charges

PAUL LUNGEN
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Nathan Jacobson with his legal team. Seen here, from left, Michael Gordner, Jacobson, Jon Cieslak and lead attorney Michael Attanasio

Nathan Jacobson sets down his tablet on the coffee shop table and arranges three cellphones on top of it.

One is for calls with Israeli security personnel, people he won't identify. Another is for calls from Joint Special Operations Command in the United States, where he too has contacts in the anti-terror community.

The third is a simple "civilian" telephone, the kind any regular high achieving businessman or philanthropist might possess.

Jacobson is linked in, big time, to all three, as he has been to senior politicians and diplomats around the world. But he's been preoccupied recently. He's spent the last 14 months in San Diego awaiting the outcome of money laundering charges. Most of that time he was free on bail, living in a hotel, but for 44 days he was locked up in prison, sharing a dorm with dozens of "gang bangers." He also spent about a month in a Toronto jail before being taken to San Diego by three U.S. marshals.

Jacobson, 59, had pleaded guilty to felony money laundering charges but was fully exonerated two weeks ago after U.S. prosecutors dropped their case against him. Jacobson had asked a U.S. court to overturn his guilty plea, arguing that he was innocent and had received "ineffective assistance of counsel."

Now, in a legal sense, it's as if he was never convicted, Jacobson told *The CJN* in an interview shortly after his return to Toronto. He's been shown to be "absolutely innocent," but it's too early to tell whether his business and political relationships will suffer as a result of his well-publicized legal travails.

Jacobson, a citizen of Canada and Israel, had hoped to some day receive the Order of Canada for his philanthropic work supporting numerous charities, including many in the Jewish community. He'd been asked to run for parliament for the Conservative party and he had been asked to serve as ambassador to Israel.

As an enticement to that posting, he was told he'd get to move into the ambassador's residence in Herzliya.

"It's 300 metres up the street from my home, and mine is bigger and nicer," Jacobson quipped.

And of course, there's the matter of the money the case cost him. His bank account is about $8 million lighter after his lengthy legal battles – $1.655 million went to his current U.S. lawyers, the law firm of Cooley LLP; $4.5 million was forfeited to the American government; and $1.7 million was billed by his Canadian lawyer.

Eight million dollars, and he's back where he started. Actually, he's behind. In his absence, his business affairs suffered. And of course, his family, wife Lindi and daughter Katya, were deprived of his presence for so many months, he said.

"It was extremely hard on Lindi and Katya. They saw [me] go from being a community leader to a felon, front page news. I feel bad for them," he said.

Only a few days after his return to Toronto, Jacobson was back in the air, jetting around the world to take care of business. One of his stops was in Baku, Azerbaijan, where he was pursuing oil and gas opportunities. He's had commercial interests in Russia and he's done business in the Arab world.

It's in those kinds of areas around the world where he can find the best opportunities, Jacobson said.

The cell phones, the ones that connect him to the shadowy world of security agencies, each cost $10,000. They feature special encryption technology that even the NSA, the American intelligence-gathering agency, can't break, he explained.

The technology was developed by one of the many companies in which he has a stake. Altogether, he has business interests in a dozen countries, and over the course of his storied career, he's hobnobbed with presidents, prime ministers and potentates, in democracies and dictatorships alike.

His relationship with leaders in the Conservative party were unfairly highlighted during his legal problems, designed to tar the party by its political opponents, he suggested.

"I have great friends within the Conservative party who have written and called and said how happy they are that I was vindicated," he said.

Today Jacobson is all smiles, cracking jokes with waitress staff and back to his gregarious self after his experience with the American justice system.

"What else am I going to be?" asked Jacobson, though he admitted he now feels "a little bit jaded."

At the height of his legal travails, he famously was in Myanmar on business when he was supposed to be in a court in San Diego. A bench warrant was issued for his arrest, and when back in Toronto, he was taken into custody before being escorted to San Diego. That was a result of faulty communications with the court clerk, Jacobson said.

But things should never have gotten to that point anyway, he added. His business was perfectly legitimate – clearing credit card transactions for online pharmaceutical purchases. His company went out of its way to vet its clients to make sure everything was above board.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

Candidates to square off at CIJA–UJA mayoral debate

JODIE SHUPAC
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Olivia Chow John Tory

Toronto's leading mayoral candidates John Tory, Olivia Chow and, possibly, Doug Ford will square off at a debate hosted by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Oct. 5 at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Wilmington campus.

Howard English, vice-president of CIJA for the Toronto region, said the debate, moderated by *National Post* columnist Chris Selley, will feature topics such as community social services, public transit and affordable housing.

"The debate is an opportunity for those who join us to consider key issues from a Jewish community lens," English said. "Hopefully, it will also encourage Jewish community members to vote in significant numbers for the candidates of their choice. Our community's collective voice is much stronger the more we participate in the political process."

Tory told *The CJN* he expects the debate will address issues of concern to the Jewish community in particular and Toronto citizens more generally.

"I come from the place that most citizens of Toronto, whether they are Jewish or of another faith or background, care about many of the same things, like the traffic and transportation nightmare that is Toronto in 2014, the need to attract and create more jobs, and making sure we keep the city finances in good order," he said. "I also anticipate issues coming up that have to do with security and anti-Semitism."

Tory said he's well positioned to address issues that concern Jewish voters.

"I understand these issues not just because I've read them on a piece of paper, but because I've sat with people in the community... and listened to them express their concerns. For example, it isn't so much the expense involved in hiring people to provide security at religious institutions [that's upsetting], but the whole principle that, in the City of Toronto, we don't want to accept the notion that anyone should have to have armed security at religious institutions."

He added: "The issue becomes not just doing everything we can as a community to provide that security through the Toronto Police Service, but addressing the root causes of [anti-Semitic incidents and hate crimes]."

Chow told *The CJN* she has a long history of working with the Jewish community on human rights and anti-hate initiatives. She referred to work she did as an MP, helping to push for federal funding for improved Holocaust and genocide education in schools.

"My entire campaign is based on the value that no one be left behind, that everyone counts no matter their income, religion, what colour they are or what neighbourhood they live in," she said.

"It's important that we focus on building a city that respects human rights and equality. The Jewish community has, historically, been at the forefront of issues of justice and making sure people are not left behind."

The UJA/CIJA debate will follow one Sept. 19 between Chow and Tory hosted by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, in which they fielded questions about hate crimes against Jews and synagogue security.

They primarily diverged on whether the city should continue to fund the annual Pride parade if the group Queers against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) marches in it: Tory believes QuAIA's participation in the parade warrants pulling city funding from Pride, while Chow said she disagrees with the group, but doesn't believe funding should be cut over this issue.

"I've had a longstanding position on this that I continue to hold to," Tory told *The CJN*. "I'm a huge supporter of Pride and have helped them when they were struggling to find sponsors in past, but I think this is an important matter of principle... the term 'Israeli apartheid' is offensive not just to Jews or Israelis, but to a lot of people who understand what apartheid in South Africa was really like."

Chow stressed she doesn't support QuAIA or what it stands for, but agrees with the city solicitor's ruling that the group doesn't violate anti-discrimination laws. Further, she suggested that pulling city funding for Pride would likely only serve to "give [QuAIA] more oxygen, or publicity."

English said that the subject of Pride and QuAIA isn't slated as a formal topic of discussion at the debate.

Efforts to reach Ford for comment on the debate were unsuccessful. ■

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GUEST VOICE

A heart is a heart

Jordana Lebowitz and Sierra Bahar

Picture a little boy in Tanzania with a pain in his heart. The pain is not caused by the absence of food in his stomach or the infections on his skin. It doesn't stem from a lack of clean water or shoes on his feet, or his inability to receive an education. This boy has pain in his heart because he was born with congenital heart disease.

He can't run and play with other children, and when his parents walk for days in order for him to visit a doctor, physicians can diagnose the problem, but offer no solution. In many underdeveloped countries around the world, resources and opportunities to treat heart disease are non-existent, nor can many afford the procedures necessary. This little boy in Tanzania will die without ever getting a chance to become healthy once again.

Israel is the only county that brings children from around the world to its borders in order to save their lives by performing pro bono heart surgery. This concept is rooted in Jewish tradition. It's our responsibility to perform tikkun olam, to heal a fractured world and make it a better place. This is exactly what the organization Save a Child's Heart (SACH) seeks to accomplish.

SACH is an Israeli humanitarian organization that provides life-saving heart surgery to children from around the world, and especially from underdeveloped countries. In addition, it works to improve pediatric care in these countries by training doctors in Israel, who can in turn provide health care to as many children as possible. Regardless of race, age, sex and religion, children are treated equally. A life is a life. A child is a child. A heart is a heart.

We, as Canadian students, were granted the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to volunteer at such an institution. Seeing firsthand the work that Save a Child's Heart does for the global community inspired us to spread its message to the world. We are one family. We are responsible for each other and share one goal, one centre, one heart.

In the Save a Child's Heart House in Holon, Israel, we spent our days educating, entertaining and playing with the children. It was inspiring to witness their energy and happiness, despite their harsh circumstances. They had constant smiles on their faces, constant laughter in their voices and constant gratitude in their hearts. Life is truly a gift, and these children grasp its deepest meaning.

While five-year-old Albert from Congo is leading us to the playroom to finish a puzzle, 14-year-old Best from Tanzania is asking to be read a story in English while 11-year-old Abdulaziz is dancing his traditional Ethiopian moves. Each child possesses their own story, their own journey. Some travelled with their mothers, some arrived alone.

The children are treated at nearby Wolfson Hospital. While visiting there, we were amazed to see Palestinian children being treated as well. At Save a Child's Heart, all three of the major world religions work together to save, to heal. There are no politics and no prejudice. Only people caring for people and nurturing the seeds that will eventually sprout peace.

We had the opportunity to take one of the African mothers, her daughter and another child who was not fortunate enough to arrive in Israel with his own mother, to the Old City of Jerusalem. Upon arriving at such holy sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Western Wall, I watched them cry. As we retraced our steps through the Jaffa Gate, leaving the Old City, the mother, Ursule, said with tears in her eyes, "I always knew that one day I would wake up and my child would no longer be there. Thanks to Israel, I can sleep soundly now with confidence in the fact that my daughter is healthy. This is a miracle. Thank you."

Pictured at the Kotel are, from left Jordana Lebowitz, Mama Ursule, volunteer Mickey Rosenblum, Sierra Bahar, Ursule's daughter, Ursule, right, and fellow heart patient Albert.

Our wish is that the world will learn a lesson from Save a Child's Heart and someday all people will come together and hearts will finally meet. ■

Jordana Lebowitz and Sierra Bahar are university students from Toronto.

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Interfaith consortium focuses on religions' similarities

JODIE SHUPAC
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To mark the UN-recognized International Peace Day on Sept. 21, a consortium of faith-oriented groups in Toronto – Holy Blossom Temple, the Metropolitan United Church, the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI) and the Peace and Social Justice Foundation – teamed up to host their first-ever Interfaith Consortium for Peace and Social Justice.

Holy Blossom cantor Benjamin Maissner told *The CJN* that the goal was to create unity between the three monotheistic religions, and to highlight the similarities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam without bringing politics into it.

Held at the Metropolitan United Church and attended, over the course of the day, by close to 300 people, the event consisted of a symposium, a communal dinner and a concert, with rousing performances by the Lachan Jewish Chamber Choir directed by Maissner, the Metropolitan Choir and the Jerrahi Sufi Assembly, representing Sufi Islam.

"We all exist under one God, though we worship this God in different ways," Maissner said, adding that "the experience of the day was just unbelievable."

The Jerrahi Sufi Assembly choir

Fatih Yegul, executive vice-president of IDI, said the consortium, which the organizers began planning about nine months ago, was designed to convey to people of different faiths the message that it's possible to come together and do great things.

"We have lot of similarities before we come to the differences between us," he said. "Let's emphasize our commonalities. We're all human beings. People should know there's a way other than conflict."

The event focused on Judaism, Christianity and Islam and not other religions, Yegul said, because of time constraints, but he hopes next year's consortium will include representatives from the Hindu and Buddhist faiths.

Although planning for the consortium predated the flare of tensions in the Middle East this past summer, Yegul said the timing made him and fellow organizers feel validated in creating an event that allowed "the believers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism to come together and create something beautiful, based on the performing arts and messages of peace."

He also said the consortium was initiated by the president of the Peace and Social Justice Foundation, Sema Donna Kenan, and that Rev. John Josef Mastandrea of the Metropolitan United Church had specifically recommended to the group that they involve Holy Blossom, saying it is very open to interfaith ideas.

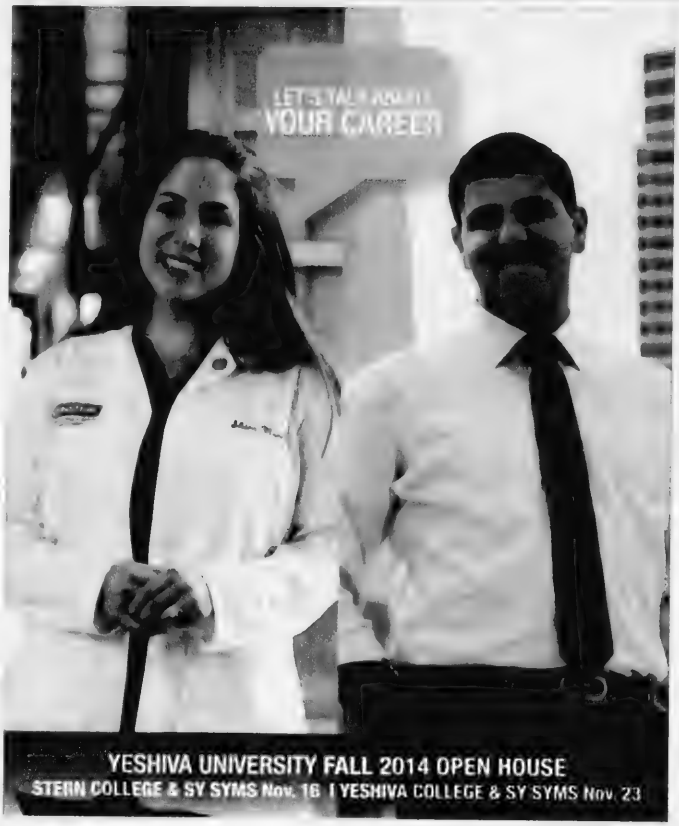
"Interfaith activities are very important to Holy Blossom," Maissner said. "Wherever we can, we do things to promote harmony and peace. If we can do so using the universal language of music, then we have some glimmers of hope."

The symposium offered two panel discussions, each with several lecturers.

The first panel addressed sources of religious conflict in the Middle Ages and included Mark Meyerson of University of Toronto presenting a comparison of Christian and Muslim views of the Jews in the Middle Ages, and Zeki Saritoprak of John Carroll University discussing violence from an Islamic theological perspective.

The second panel examined conceptions of peace in the Middle Ages, and included Holy Blossom's rabbi emeritus Dow Marmur talking about medieval Torah scholar Maimonides' conception of peace, John Dadosky of University of Toronto talking about Italian priest Thomas Aquinas and Liyakat Takim of McMaster University talking about Sufi mystic Rumi.

Maissner stressed that it's important for the three faith groups represented to continue having dialogue with one another, whether it's through conferences, symposiums or concerts. ■



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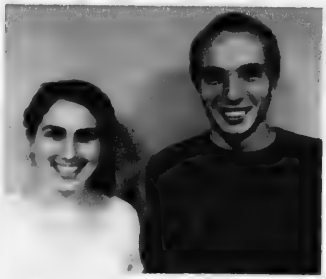
GUEST VOICE

Responding to anti-Israel, anti-Semitic activity at McMaster University

Lindsay Stitt and **Sean Haber**



Lindsay Stitt and Sean Haber

Every year during the first week of school, McMaster University's Hillel hosts a barbecue to welcome students. This year, we were thrilled to see a huge turnout. But it was clear the atmosphere was a little more tense than in previous years.

One first-year student asked whether it was safe to wear a kippah on campus.

"My mother told me not to wear my Star of David necklace," another told us.

A third asked: "Can I tell my roommate that I'm Jewish?"

The cause of their anxiety was obvious. In March, at the McMaster Students' Union general assembly, a motion was put forward calling on the student government to support the boycott, divestments and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Understandably, the motion made Jewish students nervous.

We knew we needed to take action. So, with the assistance of our Hillel director, Raffi Szajnfarber, we undertook a proactive campaign to combat the BDS campaign at McMaster. We are proud to say the strength of our community, and the quality of our Jewish leadership grew noticeably stronger when we needed it most. At the general assembly, a non-binding vote in support of the BDS motion passed after the meeting had officially ended. But since the vote was non-binding, it has no influence on our student government's policy.

We are not naïve. We expect the BDS campaign to return to campus this year. And while we know this will be a difficult and frustrating experience, we are planning to combat it in the way we see most fit for our community. We want to reclaim the right of all Jewish and Zionist students to be proud and confident of their identity on campus.

Dealing with anti-Israel activity on campus is often difficult because it has both internal and external implications. Although fighting for Israel and Jewish student rights is something we are proud to do on behalf of the community, we also want to ensure that the close, welcoming, and unique Jewish community at McMaster continues to flourish.

As Jewish student leaders, we know that we bear responsibility toward the larger Jewish community. Nonetheless, we are first and foremost concerned with ensuring that our own student community continues to thrive and is one in which students can be proud to celebrate their Jewish identity.

We are succeeding not only in our external goals, but also in our internal goals. Recently, we ran a program that offered Jewish students an opportunity to discuss their feelings about this summer's Israeli conflict in Gaza. The event was immensely successful, attended by students representing various political opinions within the spectrum of Zionism.

As a community, we created a safe space for students to both praise and appropriately criticize Israel. The discussion was open and constructive, with students growing both as a community and in their individual Zionist identities. Future programs like this will continue to strengthen the identities of Jewish students.

We want to emphasize that McMaster is not only a safe environment for Jewish students, but that it is also a place where Jewish student life can excel. While dealing with anti-Israeli sentiment on campus is often stressful and overwhelming, we can confidently say McMaster is a safe place for students to proudly identify as Jewish and pro-Israel.

We will continue to encourage Jewish students at McMaster to grow and form their own Jewish identities. We believe that in so doing, as well as proactively responding to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic initiatives, we can help McMaster become a leading example for campuses combating these issues. ■

Lindsay Stitt is president of McMaster University's Hillel. Sean Haber is president of McMaster Israel on Campus.

3,500 young people attend FSWC Freedom Day event

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some 3,500 students from across the GTA gathered at Dundas Square in downtown Toronto last week to learn how they can support causes related to freedom and social justice.

They were attending Freedom Day, an annual educational event that inspires high school and middle school students to take an active role in fighting hatred and intolerance.

Freedom Day is organized by Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) for Holocaust Studies and is the brainchild of Avi Benlolo, FSWC president and CEO.

"I wanted to create a day that forces students in the community at large to be more aware of freedom and human rights," he told *The CJN*. "We reach out to many communities through our diversity initiative."

Television personality Rick Campanelli of *ET Canada* was the MC for this lunch-time event. The roster of speakers for Freedom Day 2014 included, Olympian Meaghan Mikkelson, aboriginal rights activist Wab Kinew, students who had won scholarships for their social justice activism, and two victims of hatred. Max Eisen is a Holocaust survivor, and Mariatu Kamara, 28, was badly maimed in 1998 by rebels during the 11-year Sierra Leone civil war.

Sole Power dancers entertained the students and led them in some high-energy dance moves. The students cheered and waved banners and posters in response to many of the speakers.

Scholarship winner Liel Miron-Halyo, whose family was affected by the Holocaust, said her goal was to make her community a better place.

Student Eva Xu urged the students to become agents of change. "Taking action is the path to true freedom."

Ricky Brooks, who co-chaired Freedom Day with Mark Satov, stressed the importance of standing up against bullying. "Protect those who can't protect themselves."

In fact, one speaker who took action against bullying when he was a high schooler had particular resonance with the students. Many of them knew about the anti-bullying campaign of Travis Price, a co-founder of Pink Shirt Day.

They cheered loudly when he spoke, and many of them wore pink shirts as a show of support for his work.

Price recounted how Pink Shirt Day began as a response to bullying in his high school. When he was in Grade 12, he heard about a Grade 9 student who had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school, and Price and some of his friends wanted to do something to support the younger student.

"When we heard about what happened and the injustice, we felt that we should stand up for him. We said, 'We can't beat up the bullies. Let's show him he's not alone.'"

They contacted their classmates through social media and asked them to wear a pink shirt to school the next day.

"We didn't know if we would be the only kids wearing pink shirts. There were 1,000 students at this rural Nova Scotia high school and 800 kids came to school in pink shirts. So many of them wore pink shirts, because they were bullied too."

Word spread. Six other schools had a Pink Shirt Day and soon the number of participating schools increased to 25.

"By the end of the month, 2,000 schools worldwide had a Pink Shirt Day. Seven years later, Pink Shirt Day has 6.8 million supporters worldwide in 14 countries," he said.

"It's all about kids like you saying, 'Enough is enough. It's cool to stand up for others.'" ■

Some 3,500 high school and middle school students from across the GTA gathered at Dundas Square in downtown Toronto for Freedom Day 2014, organized by the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies. BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

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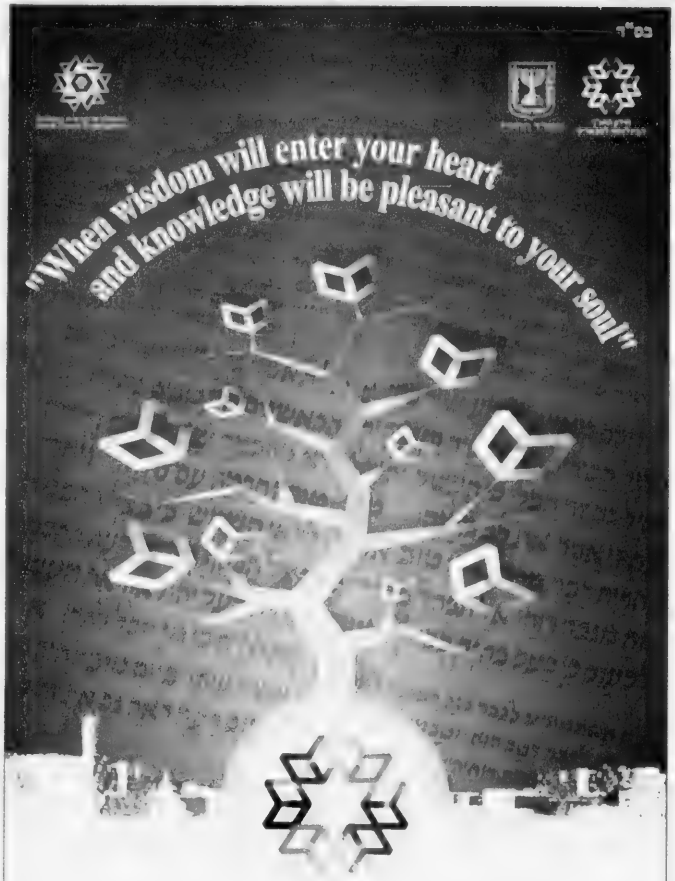

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Israel's oldest hospital celebrates 120 years

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dr. Yehezkel Caine

An old Jewish blessing states, "You should live for 120 years," – and Herzog Hospital in Jerusalem is doing just that.

This year, Israel's oldest hospital is celebrating its 120th birthday.

Herzog is Israel's foremost centre for geriatric and mental health care, treatment and research, and it's committed to improving the quality of life for people suffering the effects of aging, neurological disorders, mental illness, respiratory ailments and psychological trauma.

"Herzog was established in 1894 on Rosh Chodesh Tevet, the fifth or sixth night of Chanukah. If we use the Hebrew date, Herzog's official birthday will fall in the middle of December this year – when the fifth or sixth candle will be lit during Chanukah," Dr. Yehezkel Caine, director general and CEO of Herzog Hospital, told *The CJN* from Montreal during a recent trip to Canada on hospital business.

Herzog has strong Canadian connections.

In 1977, a small group of people, impressed by what they saw at Herzog during a visit to Israel, decided to establish the Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital, to bring Herzog's activities to the attention of Canadians.

"We are pleased to continue to do this, to support the outstanding work of the hospital, in the fields of both treatment and research," said Wendy Switzer Myles, current chair of Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital.

In addition, Herzog's Temmy and Albert Latner Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psychotrauma was founded in 1989 by experts in the field of traumatic stress to promote the development of services and treatment for trauma survivors throughout Israel. The centre was endowed by Toronto resident Albert Latner.

It has developed a program to help children deal with psychological trauma and build resilience. Individuals can phone a hotline or come to a free walk-in clinic.

"Trauma is something that, if it is treated early, can often be abated. If it's delayed or not treated it becomes ingrained and almost impossible to eradicate," Caine said.

Herzog has developed an additional specialization in the field of respiratory care for all ages, including a children's respiratory unit. Congenital defects, genetic diseases or trauma caused by accidents or malice – such as falls, drowning, car accidents or terror accidents – can cause such severe injuries that a child requires the continued support of a respirator to breathe. The unit treats children from three months to 18 years, from all walks of life and denominations.

> *The need and demand for beds - especially in geriatrics - is exploding rapidly.*

"Our children's respiratory unit is the largest in Israel, and we are the only centre of this type in Jerusalem," Caine said.

As part of its 120th anniversary celebrations, the hospital will be expanding. With its new wing, to be known as the Samson Medical Pavilion, it's adding 270 beds to its existing 330.

"The population of Israel is both aging and growing. The need and demand for beds – especially in geriatrics – is exploding rapidly," Caine said.

Another major feature of the new construction is an underground hospital. To be built beneath the new building into a mountainside and used during emergencies, this facility, when complete, will house an additional 300 beds.

The Samson Medical Pavilion will open in early 2015.

"This is cause for celebration. We will host a scientific symposium which will focus on brain discoveries and aging," Caine said. "One of the most important things we doctors can do is to help care for the elderly. The care for the elderly is going to be the largest single drain on the economics of medicine in the next few decades as the population ages – not just in Israel, but the world over." ■

Jacobson retracted guilty plea

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

"Nobody in the industry was as demanding of a high standard as we were," he said.

He was even in contact with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to alert them about problematic business practices in the industry, Jacobson added.

When he visited the offices of one client in Costa Rica, he became concerned over their business practices and severed the relationship the next day. He was indicted nine months later along with 17 others. He didn't recognized any of their names.

He faced multiple charges, but U.S. prosecutors offered a plea bargain if Jacobson admitted his guilt. His guilty plea was the subject of a court hearing in July in San Diego.

"Based on the evidence before this court, including Mr. Jacobson's sworn declaration and the testimony of his former counsel [Toronto lawyer] Steven Skurka, and the government's non-opposition to the motion to withdraw... the court finds that there are fair and just reasons for withdrawal of Mr. Jacobson's guilty plea," ruled U.S. District Judge Janis Sammartino.

The order restores Jacobson's innocence, but doesn't give him back the time he spent in custody. In his first week in jail, he was put in "the hole," the nickname given solitary confinement, because, he said, of concerns that given his military background, he'd be dangerous.

Afterward, he was moved to the general population, living in a dorm with 53 other people.

Despite his experience behind bars, Jacobson looks on the positive side of things. Prisoners had air conditioning, television, he had his own radio, books to read, a telephone to the outside world. He was served kosher food.

"So how bad was it? It wasn't that bad," he recalled. "I thought about it all the time. What did the generation before go through? I thought of Holocaust survivors and partisans. Compared to that, it really was a breeze." ■

Rosh Hashanah at city hall

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen, fourth from right, and Rabbi Chai Cohen, right, of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation, hosted a Rosh Hashanah ceremony at Toronto City Hall Sept. 22 that included blowing a shofar and apples and honey. It was attended by, from left, MPP Monte Kwinter, councillors Peter Leon and Pam McConnell, mayoral candidates John Tory and Olivia Chow, Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly and Councillor James Pasternak.

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GUEST VOICE

A good time to be a Jew

Avi Benlolo

If there was a time in history in which you would choose to live as a Jew, when would it be? To most people, the answer is quite obvious: with all of history taken into account, we'd prefer to live right here, right now.

As we look toward a renewed Jewish year, we reflect on our freedom from 2,000 years of exile, dispersion, oppression and near annihilation. Jewish history itself is littered with low points of ghettoization, inquisitions, pogroms and finally, the Shoah.

As human beings and as Jews, we cannot help but wonder how much our ancestors suffered to maintain their Judaism, and just how far we have come as a people and as a nation. With new-found freedoms to be creative, to innovate and to express ourselves, the Jewish People have risen from the ashes of despair like a phoenix with renewed strength, vigour and determination.

Anti-Semitism has made us reluctant to validate our contributions to the world for fear of inspiring hate and resentment.

But we deserve to be proud of our disproportionate per capita Nobel laureates, our business achievements worldwide and our philanthropic giving, our medical and scientific innovations, and our community organizations that strengthen our identity. Our learning, intellect and our incredible genius (yes genius) gives us the capacity as a people to rise above, as is evident by our success.

Israel's Iron Dome is a wonderful example of the characteristics that define the Jewish spirit. It is a "never-again" symbol of self-preservation from annihilation. It is a manifestation of group genius through technological and scientific innovation, and its very realization is a factor of our shared responsibility.

The Iron Dome represents the Jewish will to live and persevere in a world that is growing ever more hostile to Israel and the Jewish People. And while this is still the best time to be Jewish and live among other citizens of the free world, the world is closing in all around us once again. But this time, our capacity for fighting back militarily, politically, financially and socially is greater than ever before.

> *At no time in Jewish history, however, have the Jewish people been as empowered as they are today*

Over the next decade, the Jewish People will continue battling hatred and defamation in their communities, including on campuses and in churches, unions, gay pride parades and rallies. This hatred of Jews and of Israel will have a beneficial consequence: it will cement Jewish communities and strengthen their ties to Israel like never before.

An exodus of Europeans to Israel will take place in the coming years. A new generation of tech-savvy young adults inspired by campus activism and the memory of their Holocaust survivor grandparents will fearlessly become advocates for Israel as they embrace community leadership and the Zionist spirit.

While the immediate past generation of young Jews wanted to save the world by travelling to South America or Africa to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, the new Jew realizes tikkun olam starts at home. In times of distress, placing the oxygen mask on yourself first can save someone else later.

Anti-Jewish hatred and Jewish pride are at the extremes of humanity today. The next generation and the future of the Jewish world will hinge on these two elements. At no time in Jewish history, however, have the Jewish People been as empowered as they are today. This truly is the best time in history to be a Jew. Let's keep it that way by proudly applying our intellectual, financial and organizational capacities. ■

Avi Benlolo is president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

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Niagara foodies seduced by kosher bagels

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Before last spring, Jessica Bretzlaff had never baked a challah in her life.

Now, the 37-year-old mother of two operates her own bagel and challah business, called The Bagel Oven, in the Niagara region, and is rapidly filling a niche among the region's bread-starved foodies Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

Originally from Toronto, Bretzlaff and her husband Steven, who hails from northern Ontario, spent nine years living in Las Vegas, where they'd moved for his work.

When they decided to move their family back to Canada in 2011, they opted for the idyllic Niagara region, in Niagara Falls, where they'd spent their honeymoon and had promised themselves they'd one day live. The plan was for Bretzlaff, who has a background in business and non-profit consulting, to temporarily stay at home with their children, Lily-May, 6, and Charlie, 5, and simultaneously seek out opportunities to establish a small, family-run business.

While observing the area's intense foodie culture, Bretzlaff noticed a gap in the market for good quality, locally made bread.

Inspired by her nostalgia for the doughy, Montreal-style bagels she had grown up with – her parents are Montrealers – Bretzlaff spent several years experimenting with bagel recipes, researching ingredients and baking processes. (She also recently honed her own challah recipe.)

"When we lived in the States and friends or relatives would come visit us, we would request that they fill up suitcases of Montreal bagels, so we could stock them in our deep freezer and enjoy them all year," she laughed.

Upon mentioning her bagel-making endeavours to a Jewish friend, the latter remarked that a local synagogue in St. Catharines often served kosher bagels at kiddush or brunches whose quality was, to put it mildly, sub-par. Why not try to work out some kind of partnership with them, the friend suggested.

Bretzlaff jumped on the opportunity and quickly set up a bartering arrangement with Congregation B'nai Israel: she uses their kitchen to bake The Bagel Oven's products – assuming, of course, that all her ingredients are strictly kosher – and, in exchange, each month she provides them with between four to eight dozen bagels and four challahs to serve at the shul's various events.

A friend of hers, Chris Mankarios, helps Bretzlaff bake each week, and her husband, who splits his time between Niagara Falls and north of Thunder Bay, where he works as a mining electrician, helps out whenever possible.

Since officially launching as a business last May, The Bagel Oven, which Bretzlaff has mostly publicized through word of mouth, has drawn about 20 regular customers who have standing weekly or bi-weekly orders.

She either delivers orders personally or leaves them for customers to pick up at the synagogue.

"I have spent a good deal of time networking in the Niagara-on-the-Lake community," Bretzlaff said of The Bagel Oven's growing popularity.

"I often donate my mini-bagels to charitable events, and in this way, have begun to spread the word among, predominantly, the baby boomer community who have retired in this region. They're used to good bread, and are pleased to have access to it again."

She stressed that the products – challahs included – are popular among Jews and non-Jews. She even recently delivered special raisin challah, in honour of Rosh Hashanah, to a local, non-Jewish woman.

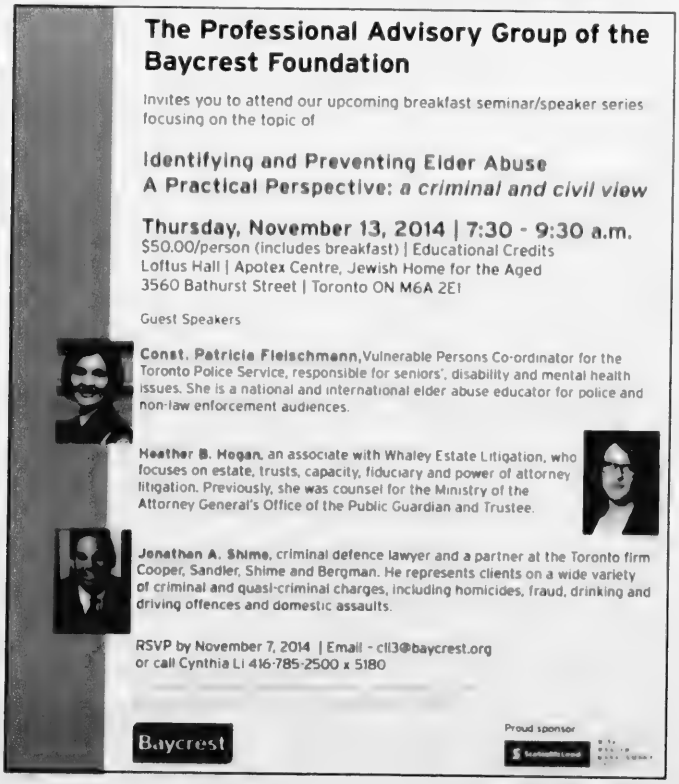
"Non-Jews seem unfazed by the kosher thing. They enjoy the bread and are happy to have access to it, kosher or not."

The arrangement with the shul has allowed Bretzlaff to keep her start-up costs low, and she has, so far, broken even.

If all goes well, her plan is to open up a physical store for The Bagel Oven next fall, though the question of kashrut remains up in the air.

"We are still weighing the pros and cons of keeping it kosher," Bretzlaff said. ■

Jessica Bretzlaff, right, and Chris Mankarios make bagels at Congregation B'nai Israel.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GUEST VOICE

My hope for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Michael Dan

In 1905, a poor Jewish carpenter from Belarus named Jacob Axelrode settled with his family in the north end of Winnipeg. A few years later, a Jewish farmer named Yehuda Moishe Henteleff and his family arrived in St. Anne, Man., from Chernigov, Ukraine. These two individuals were my mother's maternal grandfather and paternal great-grandfather, respectively. They fled czarist Russia because of issues of human rights.

My father, Leslie Dan, immigrated to Toronto in 1947 from postwar Hungary having narrowly escaped the darkest hours in the entire history of human rights violations.

Human rights violations and abuses have literally driven my family from one continent to another over the generations, but the life I knew as a child, growing up in Toronto in the 1960s, was free of anti-Semitism. For my family, Canada has always been a country filled with optimism and opportunity, a country where past ethnic conflicts get checked at the front door and children from all backgrounds mix freely and integrate.

So how does one go about thanking one's country for a century of peace and prosperity, for the absence of racism or persecution, for providing the very soil in which a family can plant seeds and flourish? In the great tradition of my eastern European ancestors, we are compelled to express our love and gratitude through the vehicle of criticism. Anyone with a Jewish mother understands this concept very well.

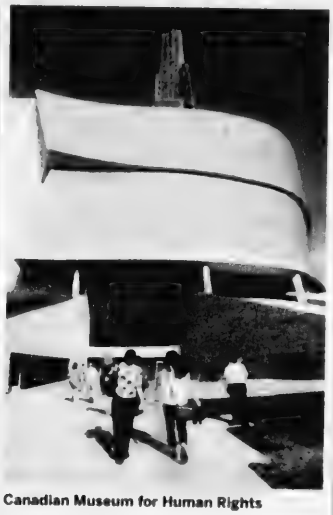
We all know that Canada is a great country, but it can be even better. The Canadian dream will not be fulfilled until it's available to all Canadians. This includes the people who were here before Canada was Canada.

Michael Dan

Let's acknowledge that before the arrival of Europeans in Canada, this country was filled with people who were entirely self-sufficient and self-governing, and that today, most of their descendants are living in poverty and despair, much to the indifference of many Canadians.

Let's acknowledge that although no level of anti-Semitism is acceptable in Canada or anywhere else, the psychological abuse, physical abuse, disappearance, and even murder of aboriginal women poses a much greater problem (at least in this country), much to the indifference of many Canadians.

It was the Haudenosaunee (also known as the Iroquois) who developed the first representational democracy in the world, who were the first to give women the vote, and whose form of government inspired the American Constitution. Those ideas, in turn, crossed the Atlantic from west to east, and inspired the French Revolution. The French translated them into three famous words: *liberté, egalité, fraternité.*



Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Fraternité, in the French sense of the word, means brotherhood, from the Latin root frater. And whereas Canada is now one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world, historical relations between Canada and its Aboriginal Peoples were hardly the example of *fraternité*.

Under the paternalistic Indian Act, aboriginal Canadians suffered, and continue to suffer, the effects of land and resource expropriation, forced assimilation, economic isolation, and cultural genocide. This has resulted in intergenerational traumas and pathology that is only now being addressed on a national level.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg is unlike any other museum in the country. The real artifacts you will find there are not the pieces of yellow cloth, cut in the shape of a Jewish star, but the idea that forcing people of Jewish ancestry to wear yellow stars was somehow acceptable.

Similarly, Canada's residential schools and the apprehension of First Nations children from their families that took place in the 1960s are not the real artifacts of history. It is the idea that all of this would lead to the betterment of aboriginal Canadians that is the true artifact of misguided paternalistic thinking.

In a country that five centuries on is only now beginning to digest and internalize the aboriginal version of the story of colonialism, it's time that we had a sacred national space where true reconciliation and healing between Aboriginal Canadians and newcomers can occur. My greatest hope for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is that it will become such a space. ■

Michael Dan, a former neurosurgeon, has worked in partnership with First Nations as president and CEO of Gemini Power Corp. to help develop sustainable economies on aboriginal reserves. His donation of more than $1 million helped make the ceremonial terrace in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights' Indigenous Perspectives gallery a reality.

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Quebec-Ottawa reconciliation a priority for Goldbloom

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca MONTREAL

Bob Rae, left, shows support for Jonathan Goldbloom's bid for the Liberal nomination in Mount Royal. Goldbloom is seen with his wife, Alice, and his father, Victor Goldbloom.

Jonathan Goldbloom kicked off his bid for the Liberal nomination in Mount Royal with a plea to seize an opportunity to improve relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada that has not been possible for a long while.

"Changing attitudes, particularly among young Quebecers, and the election of the Couillard and Coderre administrations means that for the first time in decades, we can move beyond the national unity debate and focus on rebuilding our city and our province, and on giving our children interesting opportunities and compelling reasons to stay in Quebec," he told a standing-room only audience of about 150 in the YM-YWHA auditorium on Sept. 22, referring to the Liberal administration of Premier Philippe Couillard and that of former federal Liberal cabinet minister Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre.

The MC for the event was riding executive member Marjorie Michel.

The Conservative government of Stephen Harper is not up to the task of repairing the ties between Quebec and Ottawa, Goldbloom suggested.

During Harper's tenure, Quebec has been inadequately represented in Ottawa. "It's not enough that the minister responsible for Montreal is the deputy from Roberval," he said.

After many years as a backroom strategist for both the federal and the provincial Liberal parties, Goldbloom, 58, officially announced that he wants to be the Liberal candidate in the federal election next year in the riding that Irwin Cotler has held since 1999. Cotler announced in February that he would not be seeking re-election in Mount Royal, which has been Liberal for 75 years.

Goldbloom, a public relations consultant, is the second to seek the nomination. Côte St. Luc Mayor Anthony Housefather announced that he's in the race back in March.

Cotler's longtime chief of staff, Howard Liebman, said he is "mulling" over a bid for the nomination, even though he stated in February he would not do so because of his young family.

Former longtime Toronto member of Parliament Bob Rae, interim Liberal leader between 2011 and 2013, gave his wholehearted support to Goldbloom's candidacy, praising his wisdom, integrity and ability to stay calm in the midst of difficulty. Goldbloom ran Rae's unsuccessful bid for the party leadership in 2006.

His father, Victor Goldbloom, also spoke on his behalf, recalling that his son, from the age of 10, was politically astute, joining him during his campaigning for the first time in 1965-66.

Over the years, he said, he benefited from Jonathan's counsel.

The elder Goldbloom, 91, was the member of the National Assembly for D'Arcy McGee until 1979 and Quebec's first Jewish cabinet minister. An interfaith dialogue pioneer, he is also a past Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec region president.

Speaking to a diverse audience, Jonathan Goldbloom said, "While remaining a strong supporter of Israel, we need to take steps to restore Canada's international stature. It is shocking that Stephen Harper is refusing to participate in [the Sept. 23] UN conference on climate change."

He added: "We also need a federal government that consults and builds consensus, that focuses on bringing Canadians together, not on creating wedge issues."

Rae stressed that if Goldbloom is to win the nomination, his supporters must each sign up at least five new party members and ensure that they turn out at the nomination meeting. (No date has been set.) Goldbloom later suggested that that number be increased to 10 each.

As for policy, Goldbloom said the federal government must invest more in research and development, as well as in infrastructure, in Quebec and elsewhere in the country.

"Our gross expenditure on [R&D] dropped from two per cent of GDP in 2006 to 1.7 per cent in 2011. Countries such as South Korea, Japan, Germany, Finland, Denmark and the United States are all investing between 50 per cent and 100 per cent more in R&D than we are."

Goldbloom listed his personal accomplishments, both as a professional and as a volunteer, as from "keeping the Shriners' [Hospital] in Montreal to leading the fight for access to English schools, to securing the right for psychologists to diagnose children with autism.

"I have demonstrated that I can bring people together in common cause to make things better."

Among his other supporters cited on his campaign website are Quebec Liberal Sen. Joan Fraser; Mount Royal resident Simon Bensimon; retired Liberal senator and Jewish community leader Yoine Goldstein; Jack Jedwab, executive vice-president of the Association of Canadian Studies; Dr. Nicolas Steinmetz, former head of the McGill University Health Centre; former St. Henri-Westmount MP and party president Donald Johnston; and former Notre-Dame-de-Grâce MP Marlene Jennings.

Among those in the audience cited by Goldbloom were former Liberal MNAs John Ciaccia and Lawrence Bergman, former Liberal MP and ambassador to Israel David Berger and current Quebec MP Alexandra Mendes.

Also present was Rabbi Reuben Poupko of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron, who is a Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs board member.

"Jonathan is a friend, but I am not endorsing him. As a rabbi, I can't endorse anybody," Rabbi Poupko told *The CJN*. ■

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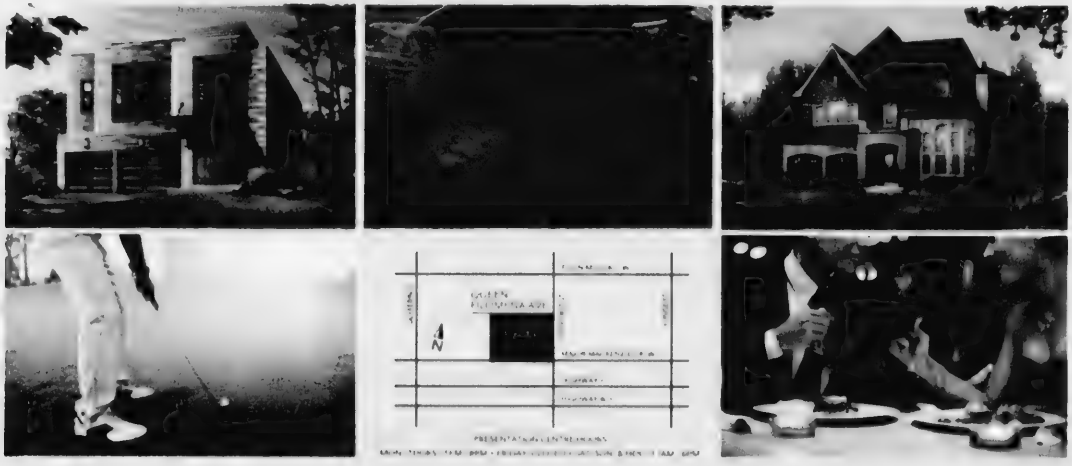

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GUEST VOICE

Charting a fresh course for the new year

Michael Mostyn

The High Holidays provide an opportune time for us to pause, reflect and examine what the future may hold in store for us. For me that journey began earlier this month when I was honoured and privileged to be appointed CEO of B'nai Brith Canada – one of the Jewish community's most iconic brands. This new chapter in the almost 140 year history of B'nai Brith represents not only a generational change, but an opportunity to consider the amazing work that the organization has accomplished, and chart a fresh course that will allow us to continue our work in the best interests of the community well into the future.

Today the Jewish community of Canada – and around the globe – finds itself in a delicate position. Repercussions from Israel's Operation Protective Edge have been felt by all Diaspora communities; and the looming threat of homegrown radicalization, inspired by the likes of the Islamic State and Hamas challenge many of the norms we hold dear.

In fact, just recently in Australia, with a community not unlike our own, the police have arrested over a dozen individuals with sympathies toward the barbaric IS in connection with an alleged mass beheading plot. The world is connected now more than ever before, and it would be irresponsible for us not to recognize that we are facing these exact same threats here at home. Radicalization of Canadian youth must be a key concern, not only for the Jewish community, but all Canadians.

B'nai Brith has always acted as a proactive vehicle for Jewish continuity and survival in Canada, and it will continue to work with government and police services across the country to combat this threat. While the media has focused on the dangers posed by battle-hardened jihadis returning to Canada, extremists are not engineered in a vacuum. Hatred is being taught to vulnerable youth and it must be stopped.

University campuses are meant to be bastions of academic freedom and intellectual pursuit. However, Jewish students now have the additional challenge of facing a hostile environment on campus. Increasingly, anti-Semitic activities, held under the guise of anti-Israel or anti-Zionist rhetoric, is something that our community must confront in an effective and systematic way. B'nai Brith has always been there for students at risk, including operating a 24-7 anti-hate hotline, but I intend to redouble our efforts on campus under my tenure.

While many people are already familiar with the B'nai Brith brand through our strong support for Israel and the Jewish people, in truth that makes up only a part of what we do each and every day and our challenge is to better communicate the breadth of our activities and focus. Those involved with B'nai Brith may be aware of the wide scope of our programming, but I believe that the broader community does not truly understand that we accomplish these good works as an independent and self-financed grassroots Jewish organization.

From the elderly who visit the Bogoroch Seniors Centre or live in our subsidized housing buildings, to the young professional who plays in our sports league – basketball registration is ongoing – and volunteers for our Chanukah basket food drive, our initiatives make a real difference to those in need. This is why I am proud to represent the independent voice of our community whose important work is only accomplished with the support of the grassroots Jewish community – people like you.

So in the spirit of the High Holidays, I would like to wish you, on behalf of myself, my family and everyone at B'nai Brith, a good, safe and secure, happy and healthy New Year with nothing but success – Shanah Tovah U'metukah. ■

Michael Mostyn is the CEO of B'nai Brith Canada and its affiliated agencies.

Tomato soup comes in all flavours

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Sukkot is the time of year I have an intense love affair with the tomato simply because there are so many varieties available and I use them in yontif meals for hot and cold, sweet and savoury dishes.

After using them in salads my next favourite thing to make with the tomato is soup. Please know that the following tomato soup recipes are great year-round not just at holiday time.

Most of the recipes can be made ahead of time and kept warm in a crock pot, on a *blech* or in the oven or heated up for a quick meal in the sukkah (weather permitting of course).

Grilled Cheese Tomato Soup

- ❑ 3 lb. Roma or Heirloom tomatoes, cut in half, seeded
- ❑ 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ kosher salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 1 1/2 tbsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. dried thyme
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
- ❑ 4 cups vegetable broth
- ❑ 8 thick slices of bread
- ❑ soft butter
- ❑ 8 slices pepper jack cheese

(any smoked cheese is good too)

Preheat oven to 400. Spray a large baking sheet (with sides) with nonstick spray. Place the tomatoes, cut side up. Drizzle tomatoes with a little more olive oil then season with salt and pepper. Roast for 45 min to an hour, or until tomatoes are golden brown and very tender. Cool slightly. While the tomatoes are roasting saute the garlic in a little olive oil until soft and golden. Set aside.

In a blender or food processor combine the tomatoes (and the juice) with the garlic. Process until blended but not too smooth. In a saucepan combine the tomato mixture and the broth, thyme, red pepper flakes and bring the soup to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Let cook for about 15 minutes. Add more salt or pepper or thyme to taste if necessary.

While the soup is simmering, butter one side of each piece of bread, place several slices of the cheese on half the bread and then top with the remaining bread, butter side up. You can fry these sandwiches in a skillet or bake them on a cookie sheet (with sides) in a 400 oven (flip once). When they are golden on each side and the cheese is melted remove them from the heat, let cool for 3 to 4 minutes then cut into bite sized squares. When ready to serve the soup, divide it between 4 bowls, top with the croutons and serve. Serves 4. This recipe can be doubled or tripled. The soup can be made 2 or 3 days ahead of time and the cheese croutons just before serving.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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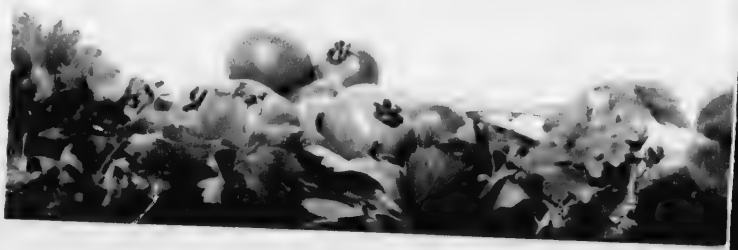

An Italian delight

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Zucchini Tomato Soup

- ❑ 2 tsp. olive oil
- ❑ 2 large carrots shredded
- ❑ 1 small zucchini, shredded
- ❑ 1 onion, chopped
- ❑ 2 tsp. garlic, minced
- ❑ 2 ribs celery, chopped
- ❑ salt and pepper
- ❑ 42 oz. chicken broth
- ❑ 24 oz. marinara sauce
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
- ❑ 1 lb. ground chicken or turkey (rolled into 1 in. balls)
- ❑ 1/3 lb. spaghetti noodles (broken in 1/3s) or small shell pasta

In a large stock pot heat the oil and add the carrots, zucchini, onion, garlic and season with salt and pepper. Saute until the vegetables soften but are not mushy. Add the broth, marinara sauce, Italian seasoning and pepper flakes and bring to a boil. When boiling, add in the meatballs and spaghetti noodles. Simmer until pasta and meatballs are cooked 7 to 10 minutes. Ladle into bowls. Serves 6 to 8. ■

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JCCs of Greater Toronto

Culinary trends chronicled in new book

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Crumbs Bake Shop Inc., the American kosher cupcake chain, went into bankruptcy in July, one could not help but wonder if the company's downfall signalled the end of the cupcake craze.

The question was put to Toronto food-trend maven, David Sax, shortly after Crumbs' bankruptcy was announced. Sax is the author of *The Tastemakers: Why We're Crazy for Cupcakes but Fed Up with Fondue* (McClelland & Stewart 2014.)

The book offers a thorough examination of food trends from the popularity of cupcakes and Indian cuisine to the marketing of kiwis, chia seeds, and new varieties of apples and rice.

Sax said he did not foresee any change in the popularity of cupcakes. "They are still selling well, despite the demise of Crumbs." And this prediction proved to be true. Crumbs emerged from bankruptcy court and in August it reopened about 30 of its 60-plus stores.

The transformation of the lowly cupcake from the chocolate or vanilla birthday-party favour of the '60s and '70s to the trendy gourmet dessert sold in flavours like key lime and red-velvet cheesecake is well documented in the first chapter of *The Tastemakers*.

Sax tracks the proliferation of specialty cupcake shops in New York City. He connects the rise of this food fad to the iconic HBO TV series, *Sex and the City*. The New York-based show ran from 1998 to 2004.

Apparently fans who visited New York created a huge demand for the gourmet cupcake eaten by the show's star, Sarah Jessica Parker, in season 3.

Sax says this 20-second cupcake scene sparked the dessert trend that became a global phenomenon.

Other chapters in *Tastemakers* depict the culinary boardrooms where new food concepts are developed and marketed. We learn that food trends get launched at a multitude of events – food shows, food conventions, food awards and media tours, and we meet many of the people selling the various foods and products.

In a recent interview, Sax, 34, told *The CJN* that he set out to write *The Tastemakers*, his second book, to explore how and why certain foods became popular. "I wanted each trend to show something different. There are tons of food trends beyond the book."

His first book, *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart Of Jewish Delicatessen* (McClelland & Stewart 2009), garnered a prestigious James Beard Award for Writing and Literature, and established his reputation as a serious food writer in both Canada and the United States.

However, Sax's foray into food writing was somewhat serendipitous, he said. *Save the Deli* actually grew out of a term paper he wrote as an undergraduate student at McGill University.

When he was growing up in Toronto, he recalled his Montreal-born parents rhapsodizing about the great delicatessens of their hometown. But by the time he got to McGill, many of these restaurants were gone.

He wrote about this disappearance and eventually chronicled this trend, which was occurring in cities across North America.

Sax noted that the current societal interest in food is a reflection of culture being expressed through food. "Trying a new food is a small indulgence that can give a person a feeling of sophistication."

He said food is also a social equalizer in that people may not have the money for exotic vacations, but they can often afford an ethnic meal. "You can't travel to Paris, but if you have a crepe, you get the feeling that you're doing something interesting."

Sax said he always wanted to be a writer and so he launched his freelance career after graduating from McGill. He lived in South America for 2 1/2 years "to do something different" and during that period he wrote about food and cultural trends for such publications as *Bloomberg Businessweek*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *New York Times*.

Sax, the father of a one-year-old daughter, confessed that despite his strong connection to the culinary world, he does not fuss about his personal food choices. "I tend to be more of an opportunistic eater. I eat what's around." ■

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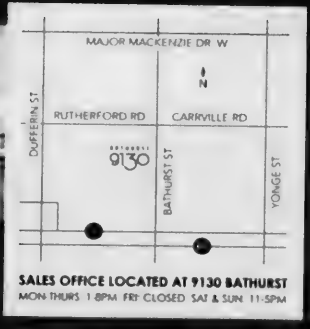

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Abbas is winning abroad but losing at home

ABDULLAH H. ERAKAT
JERUSALEM

Palestinians say that when it comes to diplomacy abroad, nobody can challenge 80-year-old Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas. But when it comes to matters in the Palestinian territories, he doesn't do so well.

In his speech to the UN Security Council last week, the Palestinian leader accused Israel of conducting a "war of genocide" during the recent aggression in Gaza. The United States slammed Abbas' speech as "offensive" and "counterproductive" for any future peace talks.

Palestinian analysts said Abbas was aiming at his home audience, where he was seen as not being tough enough on Israel during this summer's fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. While Abbas has stature outside the West Bank, he is coming under growing criticism at home.

"He has gained among international parties, but failed on the internal issue. There is still division [between Abbas' Fatah party and Hamas], no state institutions and a suspended Palestinian Legislative Council," Hasan Khresheh, PLC vice-president told *The Media Line*. "He has not worked hard enough on ending the division. The unity government is not functioning at all, and if they don't unite now, they will never be united."

In April, a unity deal between the previously bitter rivals, Fatah and Hamas, was reached, although it has not been implemented. Last week, Palestinian representatives of Hamas and Fatah agreed in Cairo that the Palestinian unity government will extend its control to include the Gaza Strip. Hamas hopes that the new government will manage to pay the salaries of 45,000 employees who were added to the PA since Hamas took over control of Gaza in 2007. Palestinian media report that efforts are underway to pay them through a third party before Eid al-Adha (the Muslim holiday of the sacrifice) Oct. 4.

Khresheh said Abbas' main agenda is returning to negotiations with Israel under the auspices of the Americans. But he also said that most Palestinians have given up on bilateral negotiations with Israel, which have achieved little.

"Such negotiations will not bring rights to our people," he said.

The fact that Abbas has been a key player in the Palestinian political process for years and hasn't called it quits deserves recognition, he said.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas FLASH 90 PHOTO

"He works very well diplomatically, although he is under constant pressure from the United States and Israel."

Khresheh said that as nothing has been gained since the United Nations recognized Israel as a non-member observer state two years ago, the Palestinian Authority should join other international bodies such as the International Criminal Court. Israel has opposed this, fearing that it could be subject to war crimes trials.

Khalida Jarrar, a member of the small, hardline group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said negotiations with Israel have not achieved anything and Abbas should pressure Israel via international organizations.

"I disagree with going back to negotiations," she told *The Media Line*.

Jarrar said action is needed, not more speeches. "He is just delaying going to the International Criminal Court. The ICC and sustaining Palestinian unity should be top priorities."

Fatah senior foreign policy adviser Husam Zomlot said bilateral talks with only U.S. sponsorship have failed the Palestinians for 21 years and only gotten them a "state of limbo." He urged Israel to be more forthcoming in its negotiations with Abbas, who has long advocated a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

> *PA leader accused Israel of conducting a 'war of genocide.'*

"The president believes firmly in the two-state solution, and supports nonviolence," Zomlot said. "This is an opportunity that... will not repeat itself."

The Fatah official said a peace partner like Abbas, who has a clear political horizon, may not come again.

London-based researcher Abdullah Hamidaddin said the real question is how Abbas will manage the negotiations.

"Abbas has worked very hard but has had few successes," Hamidaddin said. "But he was not decisive enough in the last round of negotiations. He entered them after much hesitation, and then hesitated to make tough decisions," like pulling out of the talks as Israel continued to expand construction in areas that Palestinians say must be part of a future Palestinian state. ■

The Media Line
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Sotloff a symbol of the west: Netanyahu

JTA
JERUSALEM

Slain American-Israeli journalist Steven Sotloff symbolized western culture to the Islamists who murdered him, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"I would like to send condolences to the family of Steven Sotloff, who was murdered by ISIS in an act of appalling brutality," Netanyahu said last week at a ceremony honouring the Israel Police's Yamam anti-terrorism unit.

"Steven was murdered because for the terrorists he was a symbol of the West – the same culture that extremist Islam wants to eradicate."

Sotloff, who was Jewish, was abducted last year after crossing the Syrian border from Turkey. A video documenting his beheading was released by the Islamic State, or IS, also known as ISIS.

In his address, Netanyahu linked the actions of IS to those of Hamas.

"Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, Al Qaeda, Jabhat al Nusra, Boko Haram and others like them are all arms of the same Islamist, terrorist, violent and hate-filled octopus," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu equated Hamas and IS also after the beheading last month of another American journalist, James Foley. ■

OPINION

Let love overcome

Sagi Melamed

"In the end, love overcomes," my late friend Eitan Gdalizon used to say. During tense meetings, stressful negotiations and difficult deliberations, when others were being stubborn, aggressive or even downright rude, Eitan would share a little story or song snippet and repeat his mantra: "The way of love is stronger than any other. In the end, love overcomes."

"His mother wants him to serve in army intelligence, but Yehuda [all names in this column have been changed] is determined to get into an elite commando unit," said Gidi.

I was Yehuda's karate instructor for many years and I knew that whatever path he took in the army, he would follow it seriously, professionally and successfully. "You know, Gidi," I answered, "you no longer have any choice in this matter. You can't bring up a child on Zionism, love of the land, volunteerism and excellence, and then be surprised when he wants to join an elite army unit. Your parenting has been guiding him along this path since childhood, and the only thing you can do now is be cautious and proud parents."

Avner is several years older than Yehuda and has already served four years in the elite unit to which Yehuda aspires. A few weeks before Rosh Hashanah, Avner married a young woman who, like him, grew up in our community of Hoshaya. The whole community celebrated with them. Under the chupah, as the rabbi placed the traditional glass at his feet, Avner pulled a note from his pocket, and, in a voice choking with emotion, asked the guests to join him in a moment of remembrance and sorrow: "Even now, at the moment of our greatest happiness, we remember that nothing is ever perfect… Let us remember our friend and classmate Oren, who wanted so much to be with us today but who fell a few weeks ago while serving in Gaza."

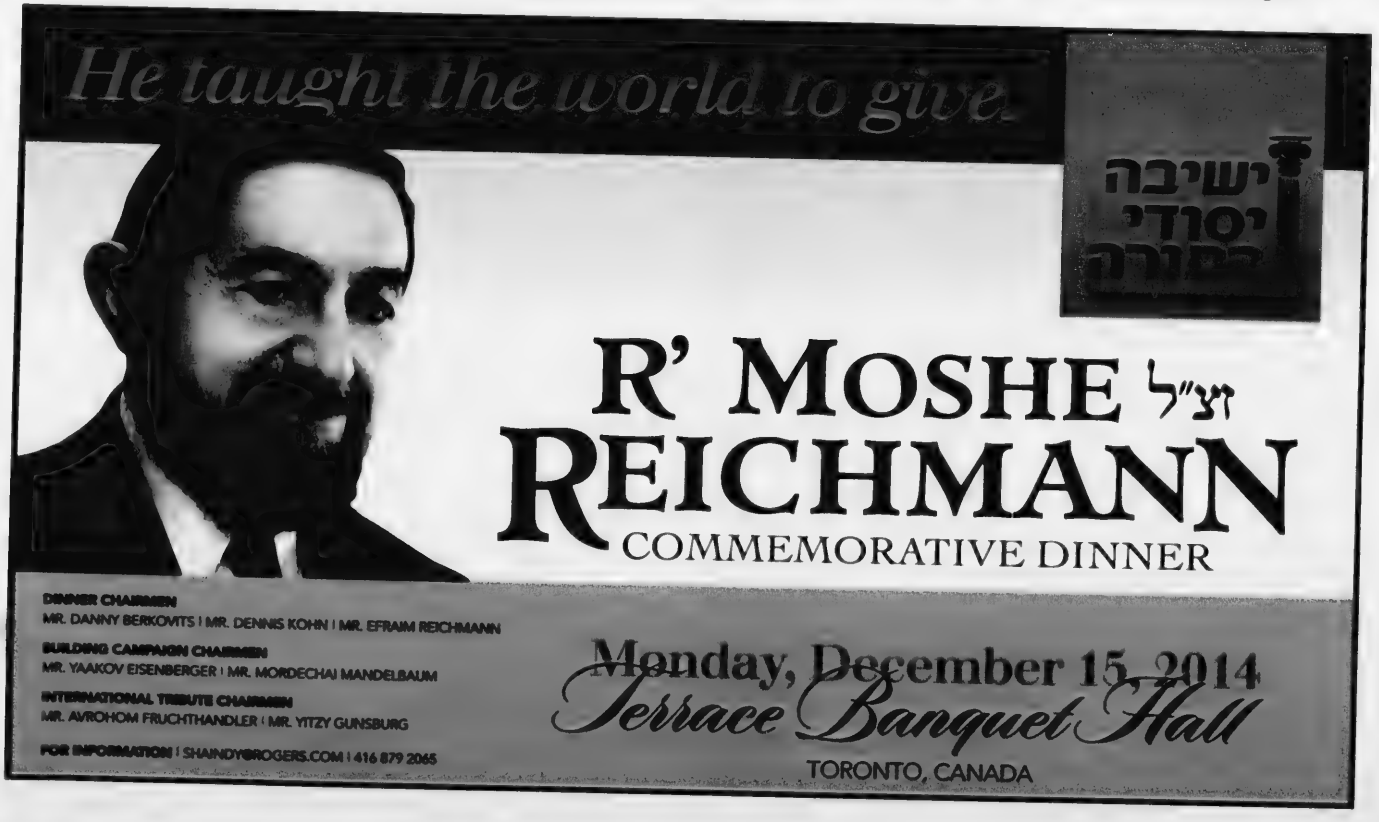
In recent months, a cruel new player has swept onto the scene in the Middle East. ISIS terrorizes civilians and soldiers while it rages through the area. Before we barely have time to recall what its initials stand for, ISIS is virtually on Israel's doorstep. The world is still learning what ISIS is – and it had better learn fast – but from what we know so far, it looks like we are not talking about large numbers or a lot of advanced weaponry. Its arsenal consists of the oldest weapons of all: hate and terror, using the sickening tactics of beheading, rape and mass slaughter. As of this writing, Israel is not at the top of ISIS's enemy list, but I believe it is just a question of time before ISIS – or at least some splinter group thereof – becomes enamoured with the idea of targeting the only democracy in the region.

> *The IDF does not induct soldiers who are motivated to succeed by hatred*

The IDF does not induct soldiers who are motivated to succeed by hatred, or whose personal success is based on the numbers of those who are killed. When IDF fighters answer what motivates them to spend three or more years in Sisyphean hard work under difficult, life-threatening conditions, most of them say things like, "The challenge," "Someone has to do it," "I have no other country," "My comrades," or "My upbringing." Hatred for the enemy is not on the list.

Israel is surrounded by enemies who hate us, hate Jews and hate what we represent. Most reasons for this hatred stem from a long history seasoned with detestation of the occupied for the occupier and the vanquished for the victorious.

Many challenges face Israel. One less obvious yet hugely important challenge is to continue using love to fuel the motors of Israel's dreams, security and creativity, and not allow the fuel to be contaminated with hatred. As my friend Eitan would say: "The way of love is the strongest." ■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Lancet stands behind letter to the editor

JTA

The Lancet will not retract a letter slamming Israeli policy in Gaza in light of evidence tying two of the authors to support for white supremacist David Duke.

The British medical journal's editor, Dr. Richard Horton, dismissed evidence that two of the five authors of "An open letter for the people of Gaza," published in the August issue, had distributed a video by Duke, according to the *Telegraph*. Horton called the revelations "utterly irrelevant" and "a smear campaign."

The letter described Israel's Gaza campaign as "a massacre" and "a ruthless assault."

NGO Monitor, a media watchdog, unearthed emails of Dr. Paola Manduca, a geneticist at the University of Genoa, and Dr. Swee Ang, an orthopedic surgeon, forwarding a video titled "CNN, Goldman Sachs, and the Zio Matrix" in which Duke accuses Jewish banking, media and political figures of conspiring to create "an unholy tribal alliance." Duke has had ties to the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups.

In her email, Ang writes, "This is shocking video please watch. This is not about Palestine – it is about all of us!"

Manduca also forwarded an article suggesting that a Jewish conspiracy may have been behind the Boston Marathon bombings.

In response to questions from the *Telegraph*, Manduca denied being anti-Semitic, but added, "I legitimately use my right of freedom of opinion and do not agree or value the politics of the government of Israel, nor of many others, including Jews in and out of Israel."

Ang, in turn, told the *Telegraph*, "I didn't know who David Duke was, or that he was connected to the Ku Klux Klan. I am concerned that if there is any truth in the video, that Jews control the media, politics and banking, what on earth is going on? I was worried."

Lancet's refusal to withdraw the letter in light of the new information has drawn condemnations from respected figures in the British medical establishment.

Mark Pepys, director of the Wolfson Drug Discovery Unit at University College London, wrote that "Horton's behaviour in this case is consistent with his long-standing and wholly inappropriate use of the *Lancet* as a vehicle for his own extreme political views," according to the *Telegraph*.

Pepys added, "It has greatly detracted from the former high standing of the journal."

Horton dismissed the criticism."I don't honestly see what all this has to do with the Gaza letter," he told the *Telegraph*. ■

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Netanyahu at the UN

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, last Sunday in New York, ahead of his Monday night speech to the UN General Assembly. It was the first meeting between the two countries' leaders in more than 10 years. Netanyahu said he was "delighted" to meet Modi and invited him to visit Israel, in what would be a first for an Indian prime minister. Read about Netanyahu's speech to the UN on www.cjnews.com.

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Mossad leader remembered for his creative solutions

MITCH GINSBURG
JERUSALEM

Mike Harari, above. His unit's key information helped rescue the hostages in Entebbe (left.)

The man who led the Mossad's operational unit before and after the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, a lover of art and opera, a francophile who kept a framed Beretta handgun on his piano – a memento from the heady days in Europe – died on Sept. 21. Mike Harari is survived by his wife, Pnina, two children and five grandchildren. He was 87.

The majority of Harari's actions in defence of the state of Israel will never be known, Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon said the next day. "But anyone who had the privilege of knowing him knew that he was a rare and groundbreaking man of operations, brave and creatively daring, whose influence on the Mossad and on generations of combatants is evident during these days and will continue to be so for many more years."

Under Harari, the Mossad's Caesarea unit delivered key information enabling the 1976 hostage rescue in Entebbe and the 1973 "Spring of Youth" commando operation in Beirut, and led the clandestine anti-terror war in the capitals of Europe, killing those Israel held responsible for the 1972 Munich Olympics terror attack. In one tragic instance, a team of men and women under his command gunned down an innocent Moroccan waiter in Lillehammer, Norway – after which he offered then-prime minister Golda Meir his resignation.

She turned him down, saying there was still too much work to be done. The dreadful error, though, likely barred his way to the very top of the organization.

After his 1980 retirement, the Mossad continued to use his services. At one point in the mid-2000s, Mossad commander Meir Dagan bestowed the intelligence agency's highest honour on Harari for work he performed at the age of 80. The citation was given, Aaron J. Klein wrote in *The Master of Operations*, a biography of his time in service, for his "important contribution to a unique operational activity."

Klein wrote nothing more about the matter. But a knowledgeable source confirmed to *Times of Israel* that the mission was part of the Mossad's clandestine efforts to thwart Iran's nuclear program and that the work itself required Harari to spend many months abroad in reserves service for the Mossad.

"The citation was not for bravery," the source said, underscoring that Harari was not sent into enemy territory, but for "a creative solution to a problem that couldn't be solved."

The source said that young Mossad officers, "who weren't even born when Mike retired, were left slack-jawed" by what he called an operational solution that resolved a seemingly insurmountable problem.

There were many such instances in his career, and yet, it would seem his style of leadership was epitomized by an operation that ruffled no feathers and left no trace.

Early in the 1970s Harari planned an operation in Tripoli that would have changed the shape of the Middle East, eliminating at least one very central figure. One month before the operation was to be launched, Mossad commander Zvi Zamir arrived at the old headquarters on King Saul Boulevard in Tel Aviv and gave Harari the bad news: the security cabinet had not authorized the operation. It was over.

Harari had every right to fume or flail but instead, Klein reported, he lit a cigarette and asked Zamir for permission to do a dry run – a full dress rehearsal of the operation, on enemy soil, but without the firearms and the blast.

Zamir agreed, accepting Harari's argument that it was important for the Mossad combatants, to prove to them that it could be done, and for the cabinet, for the same reason.

The plan revolved around a pair of combatants, a couple, decked out as hippies, driving their way across Europe and North Africa in a Volkswagen bus. The operation, which still cannot be fully detailed, called for the couple to travel by ferry from Napoli to Palermo to Libya. The only problem was that by the time the dry run had been green-lighted in Tel Aviv, there were no tickets left for the ferry.

Harari instructed his combatants to drive to the port and wait online. "I'll get you on the ferry," he told them, according to Klein's account.

He got there 15 minutes before the couple and watched the port. Somewhere, he knew, would be the strongman, the stevedore who gave out the orders. He found him, waited for the right instant, and strode over, arms spread wide. "Giovanni!" he said, filling the man's big palm with 20 bills of 10,000 Lira each. "Here are my tickets, and there's the vehicle," he said, pointing to the bus.

Twenty minutes later, the combatants waved goodbye to Harari from the deck outside the first-class cabin. As he departed, he saw a fair-haired couple standing outside their Volvo, protesting, in vain, that they had ordered the cabin in advance.

The operational plan was followed in full. Harari was born in Tel Aviv on Feb. 18, 1927. In 1943, at age 16, he lied about his age and joined the Palmach, the pre-state militia. In 1946, still shy of his 20th birthday, he was sent to Marseilles, France, where he was put in command of 1,300 displaced Holocaust survivors looking to illegally immigrate to Israel. It was in France that he learned first-hand of the devastation of the Jews of Europe and of life undercover.

After the founding of the state in 1948, he established the security regime at Lod Airport and, later, at Israeli embassies around the world.

Isser Harel, the legendary commander of both the Mossad and the Shin Bet, gave him the embassy security job in 1952 and, two years later, appointed him commander of Tzomet, the Mossad's human intelligence-gathering wing.

While Harari was serving in that role, in the early '60s, Harel summoned him from Paris to Cologne, Germany, and told him, in a cafe after midnight, that he had an important operation in the works but that he was only taking volunteers. "Only God will save you if things get complicated," Harel said, according to Klein's account.

Harari took the job, putting together his own cover story, as a filthy-rich hunting aficionado eager to bag an elephant and other wild animals. He would not hide the sniper's rifle he was asked to smuggle into the country, as Harel had suggested, but rather would place it at the bottom of a huge set of luxury suitcases from Paris. If anyone had any questions, he was prepared to act as if it was understood that he travelled with his own firearm.

Only a change in the "quality target's" travel plans foiled the ambush and spared the man's life.

In July 1973, a Mossad team under his command believed it had spotted Ali Hassan Salame, a PLO commander thought to have played a central role in the Olympics massacre. With Mossad commander Zvi Zamir stuck in transit, Harari assured him that the man was Salame, and Zamir, from Schipol Airport in Amsterdam, authorized the assassination. The Mossad men killed an innocent man, Achmed Bouchiki. His wife, Toril Larsen Bouchiki, was seven months' pregnant at the time.

Several years later, in July 1976, Harari called a Mossad operative from vacation and tasked him with the job of flying over the airport in Entebbe. The pilot snapped several rolls of film and landed at the airport, allegedly to fill up the gas tank. He went up to the control tower and chatted with the officials there, who detailed all they had seen during the hijacking of Air France Flight 139. The information was relayed back to Israel and hand delivered to then-prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. According to Klein's account, Rabin looked over the images and said, "That's the intelligence I wanted. With this, we can carry out the mission."

In 1980, after 37 years of service, he retired.

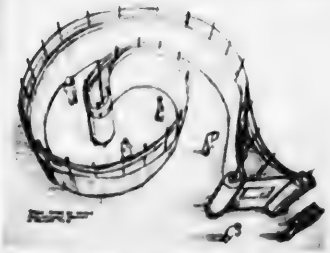
Klein, in a phone interview, said Harari left more of an impression on the Mossad's operational unit than any of his predecessors or successors, describing operations that continued to run for years after his retirement.

"The Mossad would not look the way it looks without Mike," he said. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Jewish Life

Project reveals the Torah – stitch by stitch



Top: Sketches by Phillip Silver showing how the finished Torah project would be exhibited. Above: Temma Gentles, left, and Marilynne Cass with a few of the completed panels.
LILA SARICK PHOTO

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

A project that unites Jewish converts from Guatemala, a Mother Superior who lives in a convent in London, England and a Russian-Jewish man in Hamilton, Ont. is taking shape piece by piece in a Toronto art studio.

The idea, to cross-stitch the entire Torah, four verses at a time, is slowly coming to life as volunteer stitchers around the world complete their meticulously worked canvases. The canvases are laid out end to end in Temma Gentles' temporary studio in Holy Blossom Temple, some bursting with vibrant colour, others starkly elegant with just the unembellished black text.

By the time the project is finished, 1,463 canvases will have been completed and stitched together to form a massive scroll nine-feet-tall and about 100-yards-long (around three by 90 metres).

Gentles, a textile artist, conceived of the idea while on sabbatical in Israel two years ago. "The purpose was to engage people with the words of Torah," she says. "I didn't know if there would be three people or 10."

But after a call for volunteer stitchers appeared in *Hadassah* magazine, the project took on a life of its own.

Gentles and a team of volunteers, devised a font for the Hebrew script and transcribed it, letter by letter, onto graph paper for the stitchers. Kits with a canvas, pattern for four verses and embroidery floss are mailed out for $18. In return, stitchers agree to complete the text accurately and within six months.

Volunteers coach other stitchers, sometimes over Skype, proofread the finished work for mistakes and even "adopt" and complete half-finished canvases.

To date, about 900 sections have been assigned and more than 500 canvases have been returned.

The project has captured the imagination of men and women of all faiths in 15 different countries. Groups of stitchers meet in Florida, London, Los Angeles and Ottawa, among other places, to work on the project together. Orthodox men and women are also participating and can request verses without God's name in them.

The impact of the project has been beyond what Gentles ever imagined.

Some of the stitchers have started learning Hebrew, others have read their verse from the Torah in synagogue. Participants are also encouraged to dedicate their project to someone.

"One man dedicated it to his Russian mother, who taught her sons how to cook and sew," Gentles said.

One day Gentles received a call from a woman who had been randomly assigned verses from the section that deals with the death of the matriarch Sarah.

Gentles said she feared the worst when the woman, who was almost in tears, told her that by coincidence she had a daughter named Sarah.

The daughter was alive and well, however, with children of her own, "the light of my life," the woman said. However, the woman had gotten pregnant while she was still in university and had considered aborting the pregnancy. "For her to be able to affirm the life of her daughter gave us all goosebumps," recalled Gentles.

The project is a curious mix of folk art and high-tech. The progress of each canvas is tracked and recorded on a spreadsheet and then photos, anecdotes and dedications are all being scanned into a computer, to be compiled into a book and searchable database.

As word of the project spread and more stitchers joined, Gentles realized she was in over her head. She recruited a longtime friend, Marilynne Cass, to serve as an executive co-ordinator and began planning the project's next step – public exhibition in a museum.

"People have every expectation that they're going to be able to take their children to see it," Cass said. "I feel we have been entrusted with a serious responsibility."

Phillip Silver, former dean of fine arts at York University, has drawn up plans for the exhibition, with the project winding through a large room, much like an unwrapped Torah scroll only considerably taller and longer than any handwritten scroll.

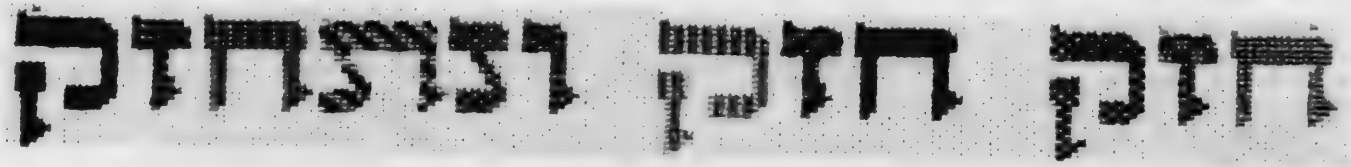
Cass, Gentles and the board are now fundraising to cover the costs of finishing and exhibiting the scroll, which Gentles expects will be ready for display in about three years.

As a final nod to the homespun nature of the project, the canvases will be sewn together by volunteers. Some out-of-town stitchers have already offered to come to Toronto to work on the project. The scroll will be assembled in pieces and Gentles envisions the sections being joined by buttons, again sent in by the dedicated global network of stitchers.

"People are sending buttons that belonged to their grandmother, [or] that held up their kids' pajamas," Gentles said.

The buttons "add a little charm, it's a little anachronistic," added Cass. The same thing could be said for the idea of asking people around the world to cross-stitch a Torah. ■

If you're interested in participating in the project, email: torahstitchbystitch@gmail.com



Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

NEW U.S. DOCUMENTARY TELLS STORY OF ISRAELI AIR FORCE

A new American-made feature documentary tells the story behind the Israeli Air Force and makes it seem as exciting as anything Hollywood could have imagined. *Above and Beyond: The Birth of the Israeli Air Force*, by director **Roberta Grossman** honours the Jewish WWII pilots, mostly from America, who volunteered to fight for Israel in the War of Independence and turned the tide of the war, preventing the possible annihilation of Israel at the very moment of its birth.

Above and Beyond offers a portrait of determined young men as their lives and sense of themselves as Jews are changed forever. The Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents two screenings as part of its first Chai Tea event of the season. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Sunday Oct. 19, 1:15 and 4:15 p.m. $15 at the door. www.tjff.com, 416-324-9121.

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Klimt & Schiele: Art history teacher **Osnat Lippa** discusses "The Commissioned Works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele – Jewish Art Patrons of Vienna." In a series of two talks, Lippa discusses how powerful Jewish families in turn-of-the-century Vienna commissioned iconic works that were ultimately confiscated by the Nazis. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Oct. 20 and 27, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Series $25, drop-in $14. Register at 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• • •

New in Print

Vivian Jeanette Kaplan, author of the 2004 award-winning book *Ten Green Bottles*, recently published a new title, *Blind Vision* (Hannover House.) The story focuses on a Mexican student of anthropology, Stefan Marquez Calle, who becomes involved in a journey of discovery that flings him backward into 15th-century Spain and the terrifying realm of the Spanish Inquisition. www.Hannoverhouse.com

***Above and Beyond* will be screened twice on Oct. 19 by the TJFF.**

Another new novel, *The Last Witness* by **Jerry Amernic**, is due out in October. The story takes place in 2039 and focuses on the last living survivor of the Holocaust, Jack Fisher, a centenarian whose worst memories took place before he was five years old. Fisher becomes the central figure in a police investigation and must reach into the darkest corners of his memory to survive. Amernic has also written *Qumran*, another novel due for release in November. It's about an archaeologist who makes a dramatic discovery in the Holy Land that pits science against religion. www.jerryamernic.com

Plunkett Lake Press has just released an ebook version of *Founder: A Portrait of the First Rothschild and His Time*, by **Amos Elon**. In this short biography of Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812), Elon describes how the founder of the Rothschild dynasty started out by dealing in rare coins and travelling across Germany while still confined, as a Frankfurt Jew, to its Judengasse; ultimately building a financial empire with the assistance of his five sons. "[S]ucceeds in snatching its elusive subject from oblivion," said the *New York Times*. plunkettlakepress.com

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Arts in Brief

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** concludes his series on Four 'Jewish' Operas with a discussion of *Saint-Saens: Samson et Dalila*. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Oct. 6, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Drop-in $18.

• "Traditions and Transitions – 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation" is on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery thru Oct. 30.

• Montreal's Infinitheatre is taking its critically acclaimed production of *Kafka's Ape*, starring **Howard Rosenstein** and **Alexandra Montagnese**, to a couple of venues in Stratford in early October. The production will play at the Church Restaurant, 70 Brunswick St. in Stratford, Oct. 1 thru Oct. 5, and at the Stratford Masonic Concert Hall, 15 Church St. in Stratford, Oct. 7 thru 11. Tickets $15. 514-987-1774, ext. 104.

***Blind Vision* by Vivian Jeanette Kaplan**

• • •

Out of Town

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Museum of the City of New York present *Letters to Afar*, a multimedia installation by **Peter Forgacs** and the Klezmatics based on a collection of home movies made by New York Jewish immigrants who travelled back to Poland during the 1920s and 1930s. Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. On view Oct. 22 thru March 22. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 2, 2014

Queen's U. theatre named after generous benefactor

STEPHEN CERA
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, KINGSTON, ONT

A small gem of a concert hall has opened here, nestled on the north-eastern shore of Lake Ontario. The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts – known as The Isabel – is an 80,000-square-foot facility. At its heart lies a visually striking 566-seat concert hall whose interior walls undulate with a variety of rich-toned wood textures. The unusually fine acoustics (designed by Arup of New York) complement the architectural conception.

The design of The Isabel involved the incorporation of elements from two historic adjoining buildings, including a 19th-century distillery complex and a stable. The architects from the Norwegian firm, Snohetta, have seamlessly redeveloped and coalesced old and new, while connecting the character of the building and the shore.

Built at a comparatively modest cost of $45 million (for a complex of this quality), The Isabel was a collaborative venture of the federal and provincial governments, with the substantial lead gift of $31 million from Alfred Bader and his wife, Isabel.

Bader, who is 90 years old, was present at the ribbon-cutting. His life story, from its background in prewar Austria, is remarkable. His grandfather, Moritz Ritter von Bader, was a middle-class Jewish civil engineer who worked on the building of the Suez Canal. His father was Jewish, but his mother was not. Despite her family's opposition, they married in London, settled in Vienna, and had two children there. When his father died soon after Alfred's birth in 1924, his mother was left with no income at a time of runaway inflation. Her sister-in-law adopted Alfred and raised him as a Jew. In 1938, after Kristallnacht, Alfred was one of 10,000 primarily Jewish youngsters allowed to enter Britain in the Kindertransport.

In 1940, Britain sent many German-speaking refugees to internment camps in Canada and Australia. Bader, just 16, was held in Quebec's Fort Lennox until the fall of 1941 when he was released into the care of a Montreal sponsor, Martin Wolff, who became like a father to him.

The performance hall at the Isabel Bader Centre. SUZY LAMONT PHOTO

Bader tried to enter both McGill and the University of Toronto, but was rejected either because their Jewish "quota" was filled (McGill) or because the chemistry department was doing sensitive war work (U of T). He applied to Queen's University and was accepted into the faculty of applied science.

Combining arts and science, Bader earned a number of degrees at Queen's and went on to complete his PhD in organic chemistry at Harvard in 1950. That year he went to Milwaukee to work in research and the next year started his own tiny chemical supply company, literally in a garage. A self-made millionaire, Bader is a survivor, an astute businessman, art collector and connoisseur of the arts. He is Queen's University's most generous benefactor.

On entering The Isabel – perhaps the crown jewel of his philanthropy – the visitor walks into a soaring light-filled atrium fronting the panoramic lakeside vista. That welcoming atrium can itself function as an event space. During intermission, patrons stroll outside and enjoy the sight of shimmering waves a few metres away.

As the inter-disciplinary home for all the performing arts at Queen's, The Isabel also has a 100-seat studio theatre with flexibility for student and community use; a 92-seat film screening room; recording facilities; an imposing music rehearsal hall with huge windows onto the lake, and whose sonic properties replicate those of the nearby concert hall; instructional space for the various creative arts departments; faculty offices and student lounges.

Clearly, the beating heart of The Isabel is that recital hall. Kingston – and Queen's – has never had anything like it. Any city with such a facility in its midst experiences its transforming impact. This is partly a matter of acoustics – music can be heard much more clearly now, set against a background of absolute silence. And the acoustics themselves engender a new keenness of listening in the audience, a reflection of the surrounding silence. (When an unmuffled cough creates a significant disturbance for all other listeners, people are inclined to suppress their coughs.) The stage is large enough to accommodate a symphony orchestra and chorus.

The Isabel is presenting an engaging concert series for its inaugural year, and it began Sept.21 with an accomplished performance by the young Afiara Quartet and pianist Maxim Bernard.

No doubt there will be tweaking and adjusting in the coming days as the architects and acoustician work with faculty, students and guest performers. Even a small shift in the positioning onstage can have a substantial effect in an acoustical environment of this sensitivity.

The good news is that there is so much to work with here. The seats are comfortable, and their colour scheme – varying shades of green – enhances the interior environment. ■

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People from another planet

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Israeli-based Voca People resemble ghosts on stage by wearing all-white costumes, singing a cappella and box beat vocals. In their shows, the eight-member troupe harmonize to popular songs and showcase the sounds of musical instruments in orchestras, such as clarinets, drums and trumpets.

The novelty of their shows begins with their identity on stage. Voca People claim to be aliens from the planet Voca who can only communicate through sound and wish to spread peace in the world through music.

Voca People, often compared to the Blue Man Group, harmonize and sing in all genres of music, from classical musicians to popular singers Madonna and Frankie Valli. They also engage in audience interaction, providing comedy between the staged musical routines.

Created in 2009 by Israeli musician Shai Fishman and actor/comedian Lior Kalfo, Voca People submitted a three-minute video on YouTube singing a medley of the history of music through popular songs and sounds of the orchestra. The video generated 15 million hits within four months and, soon after, they performed on stage for the first time in Italy.

"We did not want to create another harmony group of singers, but chose instead to do vocal theatre as actors who create the full range of musical sounds on stage," Fishman said. "To spread our message that music has a unifying power, Voca People are naive, peaceful and pure. Being dressed in all-white costumes and red lips, Voca People are outsiders (aliens) to strengthen the message of the power of music."

> *Voca People are naive, peaceful and pure.*

The members are identified as characters on stage with names such as Alta, Bari-Tone, Mezzo and Soprano to represent the full range of the musical scale.

Since 2009, Voca People have performed in 25 countries, including Israel, to family friendly audiences.

"We are very much loved by both children and adults. Kids very much relate to the pure white characters of Voca People as do the adults."

Prior to creating Voca People, Fishman and Kalfo each had their own solo careers in show business. Kalfo was known for his zany costumes, such as appearing in comedy routines as a clown in the Israeli television show *The Comedy Store* before creating more funny characters in Israeli theatre.

Fishman, now based in Los Angeles, is a musical composer who created scores for more than 30 films in Israel and other countries, in addition to being musical director for musicals such as *Grease*.

"We blended our talents in creating Voca People. Lior carried the idea of the eight-member group for four years before we made the YouTube video. Working with singers who were also actors made the characters jell in unison. The magic and warmth of Voca People is created through a team effort," added Fishman. ■

Voca People perform Oct. 2-3 at 8 p.m. at Flato Markham Theatre, 101 Town Centre Blvd. in Markham. For tickets, call 905-305-7469 or go to www.markhamtheatre.ca. They also perform Oct. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the O'Sullivan Theatre in St. Catharines, Ont.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 2, 2014

Novel conveys 'extraordinary feeling' of being in Israel

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A novel with Jerusalem as its literary and narrative core will almost always be a treat for its readers. When the author attaches to that centre various lines of plot that deal with intrigue, politics, romance and theological musings, the result can be a creative geometric construction of pleasing, story-telling delight, piquing the imagination and stretching the mind.

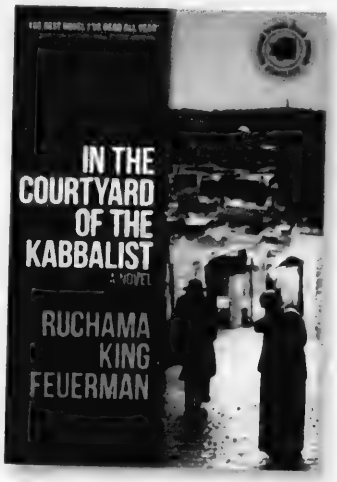
Such is the latest novel by Ruchama King Feuerman, her second, titled *In The Courtyard of the Kabbalist*.

The novel centres upon three individuals.

Isaac Markowitz, a 40-year-old former haberdasher recently arrived from New Jersey, assists the well-known Jerusalem sage, Rebbe Yehudah, in managing an unending jumble of men and women who gather daily in the Rebbe's courtyard bringing him their heartaches, pleas and personal woes. Mustafa is an Arab, born with a disfigured, permanently distended neck that is immovably fixed to one side. And we meet Tamar, a mid-20s dashing, brazen, thoughtful, spirituality-seeking American woman. These three figures, each for traumatic and painful reasons, have left their homes for a new life in Jerusalem. And, of course, their lives intersect in an ultimately fateful way.

Isaac encounters Tamar in his role as amanuensis to the Rebbe. She enters the Rebbe's storied courtyard to seek counsel for a personally pressing question of her own.

Mustafa, a janitor on the Temple Mount, also finds his way into the courtyard after a chance meeting with Isaac in the Old City. Ridiculed for his deformity by almost everyone in his life, excessively self-conscious and essentially friendless, Mustafa develops a trusting fondness for Isaac and eventually for Tamar as well. As a token of his friendship with Isaac, Mustafa gives him a gift of an archeological relic that he had rescued from a trash heap of excavation detritus undertaken by the Waqf, the Muslim religious authority on the Temple Mount. Mustafa's gift to Isaac sets in motion a train of events that advances speedily toward misadventure upon the rails of subterfuge, mishap and danger.



In The Courtyard of the Kabbalist
Ruchama King Feuerman

> *The story unfolds with drama and pathos, charm and insight*

Other "lesser" but quite significant characters in the story – Rebbe Yehudah, his wife, Shaindel Bracha, and Sheikh Tawil, Mustafa's employer – play pivotal roles in the narrative. However, the dominant strands of the plot are woven around Isaac, Tamar and Mustafa. It is worth noting that the two women, Tamar and Shaindel Bracha, are the stronger, more compelling, more assertive characters in the story.

Feuerman's main focus is the story's interesting narrative. But in steering readers through the many pathways of the plot, she frequently stops to reflect upon Israel's political and social situation and the divide between Jews and Arabs (of the West Bank and presumably Israeli Arabs too, although she does not distinguish between the two groups). She does not soft-peddle the stresses between the two peoples. For example, in one of the early conversations between Isaac and Mustafa, they have the following exchange.

"Well, Rabbi Isaac, does anyone see my village? It's a poor village, you know. We don't have the things like the Jews have." The rabbi's eyes blinked rapidly. "I didn't expect this question, though it's a fair one." He nodded. "It's sad, you're right. We don't see each other, we really don't see each other at all."

Feuerman reinforces this message throughout the story. One especially subtle but effective moment comes when Mustafa is in a taxi with Isaac in western Jerusalem. It is his first time in a taxi.

"Mustafa tried to position his head on the leather back of the seat, but he couldn't get comfortable. A catchy Israeli tune played on the radio: "what you see from here, you don't see from there..."

Here Feuerman deftly tells us that it is one's vantage in life, one's point of departure (not always a physical place) that determines what one sees. And often, what one sees is not the whole picture.

Despite the recurrence of such observations, however, the book is not a polemic on the political relations between Palestinians and Israelis. Rather, it tries to convey a sense of the uniquely complex social and political tensions – inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic – that accompany life in Jerusalem. Feuerman does this well as she describes the wide swath of the population, so idiosyncratically Jerusalemesque, who trundle into the Rebbe's courtyard with their troubles and sorrows.

Feuerman has written an imaginative tale that connects the lives of three very distinct characters. The story unfolds with drama and pathos, charm and insight. Her descriptions of the needy men and women and her astute observations regarding the inner thoughts of the main characters are so acute that they snap our minds to contemplative attention. She marvelously captures the sense of vulnerability everyone invariably experiences at one time or another.

The plot is indeed fascinating, but it seems rushed, somehow incomplete, its pace and momentum forced. Key dramatic situations need more development and nuance. In the result, some scenes – such as those involving the police commander and even the culminating event on the Temple Mount – are not entirely believable.

Nevertheless, the impact of the story is considerable.

Feuerman skillfully conveys the indescribable excitement and sense of belonging many people feel when they spend time in Israel. Isaac expresses this rush of emotion to Tamar as they ride together on a bus headed northward to the Galilee.

"Something came over me. I'd be riding on a bus or walking along Jaffa Road, and I'd feel the most amazing sensation. That I was fulfilling my destiny – not only my personal destiny, but God's plan for the Jewish People. It's an extraordinary feeling."

The pages of *In The Courtyard of the Kabbalist* richly convey that "extraordinary feeling." ■

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Nationalism splits this fictional intercultural family

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

Quebec's 1970 October Crisis has received scant critical analysis by historians, let alone been faced head-on by writers of fiction.

More than four decades after that unprecedented separatist terrorism, events which rocked not only the province, but Canada as a whole, Montreal novelist Claire Holden Rothman imagines the crisis' legacy in *My October* published by Penguin Canada.

The novel is set almost entirely in October 2001, a month after 9/11, but those vastly greater acts of terrorism barely surface in the consciousness of the characters.

My October is both a family drama and an examination of how language, culture and politics have repercussions on relationships, even generations later.

When we meet Hannah Stern and Luc Lévesque, they have been married for almost 20 years and have one son, Hugo, a deeply troubled 14-year-old.

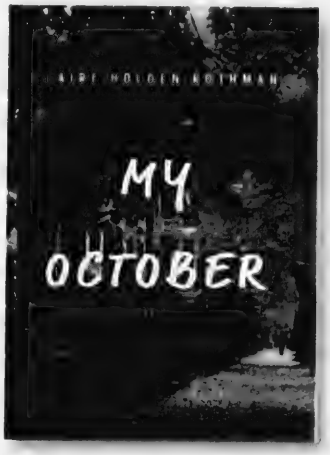
The couple is having marital problems, and Hugo has changed from a sullen, but docile, adolescent into a teen who becomes the subject of a police investigation after he is found with a gun at his prestigious private school.

His self-absorbed parents seem helpless in understanding the way he is acting, which includes re-inventing himself as "Hugh Stern," in a bid to reclaim his Anglo Jewish heritage, from which his parents have estranged him.

Hannah and Luc's marriage would appear to have been doomed from the start. Certainly, that's the way her father felt.

Hannah is the daughter of Alfred Stern, a Viennese-born Jew who fled Austria for England before the war, only to be interned there as an enemy alien and then deported to a camp in Canada, while still a teenager.

He became a successful criminal lawyer; Hannah grew up in upper Westmount. After the October Crisis, Stern was named chief prosecutor of the hundreds of people arbitrarily arrested under the War Measure Act imposed by then prime minister Pierre Trudeau.



My October
Claire Holden Rothman

Stern becomes the epitome of federalist repression to the nationalist Quebecers.

They included Luc Lévesque, then a young firebrand separatist from working-class St. Henri, but he had nothing to do with the FLQ's kidnappings of cabinet minister Pierre Laporte and British trade commissioner James Cross, or Laporte's murder – but he was not opposed to either.

Hannah meets Lévesque some years later when he is teaching at an English CEGEP where she is a student. She was dazzled by the imposing Lévesque, who has, through his brains and drive, risen from his humble origins to become a fiction writer, but has barely moderated his politics.

Hannah, always a bit of a black sheep, defies her parents and marries Luc, who never reconciles with her father.

Alfred Stern, his wife Connie and son Benjamin move to Toronto soon after the first Parti Québécois government is elected in 1976.

When the book opens, the Lévesques are living in an increasingly gentrified St. Henri. Luc is one of Quebec's most respected novelists, whose works largely draw on his own life. He is approaching 50 and going through a mid-life crisis that includes a fling with a young Québécoise.

> *My October is both a family drama and an examination of how language, culture and politics have repercussions on relationships, even generations later.*

Hannah has been his dutiful translator into English, but is at loose ends, sensing they are drifting apart, but oblivious to how troubled Hugo is about the family tensions.

Her elderly father has just had a stroke, which forces her to visit Toronto and confront the man whom she finds so formidable and who, even in his weakened, elderly state, makes her feel insecure and inadequate.

Hugo can't understand why he has barely met his maternal grandparents. He rejects his father's generation's dogmatic politics and ethnic nationalism, and especially their romanticizing of the October Crisis, which he is just learning about.

Hugo attends the same prestigious Catholic school his father managed to get into it, and his teacher Serge Vien, a boyhood friend of his father's, is an unrepentant apologist for what happened 31 years ago.

Hugo rebels when he is asked to do a project on the October Crisis with the implicit instruction that he downplay its criminality.

The Lévesques' own crisis is reached when Hugo buys an antique gun from another student at school. Although it is unloaded and stowed away in his locker, the school officials, of course, call in the police.

Luc Lévesque's literary stature probably saves Hugo from ending up in juvenile court and he, reluctantly, adheres to strict rules that allow him to avoid expulsion. The Russian-born boy who sold him the gun is not so lucky.

The gun episode is especially haunting for Luc because when he was Hugo's age his factory worker father, whom he had idolized, committed suicide by shooting himself.

Luc's leaving Hannah further estranges him from Hugo. Fed up with his depressed mother, he runs away, hitchhiking to Toronto to get to know the grandparents he has been shielded from – all because of historical events so long ago.

My October does have a happy ending, in the sense that Hugo finds the missing link in his identity – he even looks strikingly like Alfred Stern. Hannah finally realizes her father is not the ogre she had feared all her life.

She also reconnects with her own suppressed identity after befriending the easygoing, apolitical Manny Mandelbaum, the American-Jewish psychotherapist she brings Hugo to see.

But nothing can save Hannah and Luc's marriage – a metaphor, perhaps, for how anglophones and francophones, at least of their generation, are still not able to overcome their differences.

This is Holden Rothman's second novel that weaves fiction and history. Her last book, *The Heart Specialist*, was inspired by the life of early 20th-century medical researcher Maude Abbott, a Montreal woman who was one of Canada's earliest female medical graduates and experts on congenital heart disease. That book was longlisted for the 2009 Scotiabank Giller Prize. ■

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What's New

OCT. 2- OCT. 8

by Lila Sarick

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			Celebrate Sukkot or walk with Singles in the Park.			

Thursday, Oct. 2

YIDDISH THEATRE WORKSHOP
The committee for Yiddish of UJA Federation holds a 10-session class on the dramatic presentation of Yiddish stories, songs and jokes. No performance experience needed and all levels of Yiddish welcome. To register, email committeeforyiddish@ujafed.org or call 416-635-2883, ext. 5189

Sunday, Oct. 5

SUKKAH CELEBRATION
Celebrate Sukkot with Morris Winchevsky secular Jewish community school, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Dufferin Grove Park. Decorate the sukkah, games and stories. In case of rain, call 416-789-5502.

SINGLES IN THE PARK
Singles in the Park, for Jewish singles over 50, takes a historical walk through Cabbagetown and Riverdale. The group meets at 11:45 a.m. at the corner of Wellesley and Parliament streets. RSVP is essential. $10. Call **Deanna** 905-883-2963 or email mail@deannasamuels.com or debbygo@rogers.com.

BRUNCH WITH THERESA TOVA
Enjoy brunch with **Theresa Tova** and **Mark Herskowitz,** creators of *Bella:The Colour of Love*, Beth Emeth Synagogue, 9:30 a.m. RSVP 416-633-3838.

THE ART & LIFE OF MARC CHAGALL
Cantor Katie Oringel presents an abridged version of her show, *A polyphonic canvas: Jewish music and the art of Marc Chagall* and an inside peak into *Bella: The Colour of Love*, 10:15 a.m., Temple Sinai. Free.

Deadline Reminder:
Deadlines will change because of the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 23 is Oct. 7. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Students raised more than $5,000 for the Huberfeld Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem at the Sept. 14 Hoop Jam charity basketball tournament in Toronto. The event was spearheaded by Barbara Rudberg and her daughter, Nicole, second from right. With Nicole are, from left, Paige Soberano, Julia Rothman, Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation's executive director Lisa Colt-Kotler and Daniel Pollock.

Monday, Oct. 6

BOOK REVIEW
Cynthia Good reviews *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman*, 1 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $20. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Tuesday, Oct. 7

LUNCH AND LEARN
Dr. Jack Langer discusses "The ethics of separating conjoined twins from a Jewish perspective," as part of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's Lunch and Learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or email mandy@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS
Donald Schwartz, professor emeritus University of Toronto, discusses "Russian-Ukrainian Relations," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m.

COMING EVENTS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
- Circle of Care is looking for volunteers to visit isolated seniors in their homes. Call **Lysa Springer** 416-635-2900, ext. 496, or email lspringer@circleofcare.com
- Volunteers needed to provide childcare relief to mothers with cancer. Must have one year of professional childcare experience. Email info@nannyangelnetwork.ca.

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

ADULT CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS
Baycrest is offering support groups for adult children of Holocaust survivors. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or **Judi Cohen**, ext. 2322, or email syaakobi@baycrest.org.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

MORASHA CLASSES
Seymour Epstein teaches a course on "Human sexuality in the biblical narrative," Oct. 22, 29, 11:15 a.m. **Shayna Kravetz** teaches "Six poems for modern Jews," Nov. 5-Dec.10, 11:15 a.m. Classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

HEBREW CLASSES
Conversational Hebrew, ulpan method with **Yael Lev,** intermediates, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m., advanced, Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. Beginners Hebrew with **Levana Krieger,** Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING
National Council of Jewish Women shows the film *The Whistleblower* about human trafficking, **Oct. 22,** 6:30 p.m., North York Library, 5120 Yonge St. RSVP 416-633-5100.

NETWORK FOR GOOD
Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation offers a one-day professional development and mentoring experience for young professionals and entrepreneurs with top CEOs while raising funds for neonatal care, **Oct. 14.** Register at www.youngheartsceoday.com.

MAH-JONG MADNESS
Canadian Hadassah-Chaverot chapter is holding a mah-jong fundraiser, **Oct. 26,** 1-4:30 p.m. Earl Bales Community Centre, $40. Call 416-630-8373 to reserve, singles or groups.

SUKKAHVILLE
Tour the sukkahs built by architectural firms from around the world, Nathan

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Phillips Square, **Oct. 14 and 15**. Sponsored by Kehilla Residential Program.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El begins its fall lecture series, **Oct. 20** with **Nelson Wiseman** discussing, "Is Canada a failed democracy?" Series runs until Nov. 17. All lectures at 2 p.m. $45 /series, $12/ lecture. 416-449-3880.

MOMMY AND ME SHABBAT
Chabad of Markham is holding a Shabbat program for parents and children up to 18 months, starting **Oct. 31**, 9:30 a.m. Free but call 905-886-0420, ext. 227, to register.

JF&CS Groups

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Spousal Caregiver Group** for adults over 55 caring for a spouse with dementia or physical illness meets for 6 weeks starting Oct. 20 at Bathurst-Finch Hub. Sponsored by Circle of Care and Family Caregivers Connections. Call **Tessa Wassyng,** 905-738-1128, ext. 323.
- **Bereavement Group** offered for people over 65. A 6-session group offered by Jewish Family and Child starts Oct. 21, 11 a.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. RSVP 416-781-3511.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Sukkot lunch, Oct. 14, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Ave. Members, $20, non-members $25. RSVP required, **Arnold Foss,** 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park** (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Barber/hairdresser, Oct. 9, 10 a.m. Trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Oct. 30. Tuesdays balance and co-ordination class, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Seniors gentle fitness** is offered at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W., Mondays at 10 a.m. Feldenkrais awareness through movement. $55/4 classes. 416-665-9050.
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Curator **Wayne Reeves** discusses "Toronto in the First World War," Oct. 2. Doors open 1 p.m.; program starts 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
  Current events discussion group begins Oct. 6, 9 a.m. Free.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 5, **Mickey Lewin** entertains, 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 7, **Warren Green** discusses "When the healers became killers," 10 a.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation**. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4, mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call Maureen, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with Rabbi Meir Gitlin, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- PJ Plus, a parent and child (ages 18 months to 3 years) program of active Jewish learning runs Oct. 19-Dec. 21.
- Beginner mah-jong, Oct. 10-Nov. 26, 1:30 p.m.
- Enjoy Yiddish conversation, Oct. 6-Dec. 15, 1:30 p.m
- **Galya Sarner** presents a culinary workshop influenced by Bagdad, Israel and Paris, Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** hosts a virtual tour of Toronto's Jewish community, Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** presents Mix it Up with Media Nov. 20-Dec. 18, 1-4 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What is a Jewish film?" Nov. 5-26, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation* is at the gallery until Oct. 30.
- **Iain Scott** discusses how Jewish culture has been portrayed in opera, Oct. 6, 1:30 p.m. $18.
- Sukkah decorating day Oct. 5, Miles Nadal JCC, 12:15-1:15 p.m.; Wolfond Centre 11 a.m.-1:15 p.m.; Kiever Synagogue, 2-4 p.m.
- Try your hand at pottery, all levels welcome. Wednesdays 7-10 p.m. ongoing until Dec. 17.
- Sukkot after dark. Enjoy a musical rooftop Havdalah and art party, Oct. 11, 8:15-10:30 p.m.
- Spadina synagogue walk. Tour old Jewish Toronto, Oct. 5, 9:30-11:30 a.m. RSVP to Principal@djcs.org.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- PJ Plus, a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children, starts Oct. 19. Children 18-30 months at 2 p.m.; 2 1/2 to 3 years at 3:30 p.m.
- Hebrew Institute starts the week of Oct. 20. For info and placement tests, anniemg@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, Oct. 20 and 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Sign up for beginner Yiddish. Starts Oct. 23, 7-9 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Artificial paradise: The dark side of the Beatles' utopian dream," Oct. 20-Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
- Harmonia: Downtown Jewish Youth Choir meets Sundays 4-6 p.m., starting Oct. 19. Conducted by **Yonah Sienna.** harmonia@mnjcc.org.
- JCC Fitness: MELT and Pilates Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.; MELT Method-Full body for joint pain and injury management, Tuesdays, 7 p.m
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Fundamentals of drawing and painting, Nov. 19-Dec. 10, 10 a.m.
- **Steve Rose** teaches an art course, "What would Kandinsky do?" Oct. 23-Dec. 18, 1 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Joan Lowenstein** teaches watercolour printmaking, for adults and children, Oct. 21-Nov. 11.
- PJ Plus, a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children runs Oct. 19- Dec. 21.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches Experimental Mix Media, Nov. 19-Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
- JCC Book Club reads *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, by **Edmund de Waal,** Oct. 28, 7 p.m. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Grey tsunami: a dangerous metaphor for the aged

Dr. Michael Gordon

Over the last few decades, most individuals, academics and writers have learned that certain terminology that was once linguistically and culturally acceptable is no longer to be used, and in fact, when it is used, may be the subject of scorn and sometimes legal recourse.

The scandal over the use of the "N" word last spring by Donald Sterling, then owner of the Los Angeles Clippers basketball team, is an indication of just how sensitive we have become to language and how strongly we react to certain terms that are no longer considered suitable in a refined population. Just remember the controversy that surrounded contemporary editions of Mark Twain's classic novel *Huckleberry Finn* that took the liberty of expunging the "N" word, thereby distorting the power of the novel within its historical context.

There are many other terms that are used to negatively describe groups of people by religion, racial characteristics, colour of skin and country of origin – they would not be used publicly, but they are part of many people's normal private vocabulary and conceptual framework of humanity.

The term "grey" or "silver tsunami" has come into even polite parlance to describe the growing aged population, primarily in the western world. Following such natural disasters as the Indonesian and Japanese tsunamis, which were associated with horrendous geographic and human damage, one began to see the term used in the popular media to encapsulate the perceived negative impact of what should rather be deemed the miracle of modern medicine and society – the increase in human longevity.

The term began to be used in newspaper headlines such as: "Aging baby boomers will create 'silver tsunami' for Sonoma County," published in the Feb. 10, 2013, issue of the *Press Democrat*, a small local paper that reflected articles in publications with much larger distributions

Even organizations that clearly have the well-being of the aged high on their agenda may inadvertently use terms like tsunami or other metaphors to make their point about the urgency of addressing the many challenges of the aging population, a result of the wonderful advances that we have almost miraculously achieved in medical and other health-care practices.

For example, the Alzheimer Society of Canada produced a very comprehensive report called *The Rising Tide*, which is directed to policy makers to help them understand that planning must occur to make sure that our aging population receives the proper care. A Toronto-Dominion Bank report on the challenges of aging also used a negative phrase in its 2010 report, *Navigating the Storm Ahead*.

One is right to ask, as did academics such as Andrea Charise, an assistant professor of health studies at the University of Toronto, Scarborough, "Is the progressive aging of society really equivalent to the instantaneous devastation of cities?"

"The grey tsunami metaphor has the potential to endanger the validity of caring for elderly: if the elderly are like a dangerous tsunami, then why would we work to prolong or improve quality of life for this threatening population?"

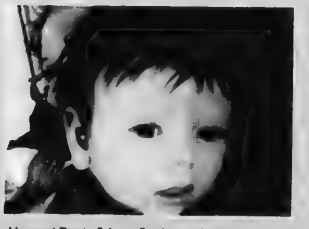
Charise offers a solution that involves a multi-part, interdisciplinary alliance between medicine, health care, media, and culture to unite against ageism.

"To prevent this kind of logic from taking stronger hold, we must work to improve our awareness of how rhetoric works to frame public discussion around aging… and how the imaginative language we use can legitimize prejudice against older persons."

It is important that health-care professionals committed to eldercare in all its various domains, and that the media as well, stay attuned to the use of language, often in subtle forms, to diminish the intrinsic, human and societal value of our aged population. They are our mothers and fathers, our grandparents, and us in the years to come. "They," who have built the world we live in, carry the narrative of our world with them for all of us to learn from, recognize and, in most instances, admire. ■

Family Moments

Jennifer & David Brinder and sister Ella announce the birth of Jack. Grandparents Shirley & Marty Peters, Miriam & the late Lawrence Brinder. Great-grandmother, Rose Brinder.



Howard Bosis & Lani Gozlan welcomed Daniel Bosis into the world July 9. Proud grandparents are Pesach & Luba Bosis and Eli & Gilda Gozlan.

Moshe & Shauna Fishweicher are pleased to announce the birth of a baby boy, Zachary Jacob, Sept. 21.

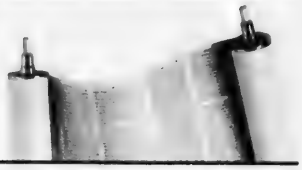
Happy first wedding anniversary, Giselle & Ryan! Two lives, two hearts united in love – keep it up for ever! Ludmila, Isaac Revah and Safta Vala.

Dr. Marc Shell and his first grandchild, Yvette Shell-Stotland. She is welcomed by her great-grandmother, Sophie Shell.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Yom Kippur | Leviticus 16:1 - 16:34



Yacov Fruchter explains why the Shema prayer is special on Yom Kippur
Rabbi Shalom Spira says that we should pray to God, not to angels
Rachael Turkienicz reveals why we wear white on Yom Kippur

Yacov Fruchter

All Jews know the words of the Shema – "Listen Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." When proclaimed by Moses, this was a statement of belief and a commitment to ethical monotheism, from which all Jewish theology stems. As the Children of Israel prepared for a new life in a new land, they had to promise their leader that their commitment to God would be eternal.

Following the first line of the *Shema*, we recite softly, "*Baruch Shem*, blessed be the name of God's glorious kingdom." On Yom Kippur, however, we recite *Baruch Shem* in a loud voice. Why?

Rabbi Norman Lamm explains that the words *Baruch Shem* are not in the original *Shema*, but rather in an aggadic text. In this rabbinic narrative, Jacob is on his deathbed surrounded by his 12 sons, and he is not dying peacefully. He tells his sons he is tormented because his father, Isaac, and grandfather, Abraham, each had one son who followed his ways and another who rebelled against God. Jacob, who was rewarded with the name Israel, is concerned that some among the "children of Israel" will not continue his way of life. In response, they recite in unison the words of the *Shema*. Listen Israel (our father), the Lord is OUR God. They are promising their father and each other that they will keep their commitment to HaShem. Jacob responds by reciting out loud the words *Baruch Shem*, "thank God!"

During the year, the *Shema* of Moshe dominates and does not require the emotional response, *Baruch Shem*.

On Yom Kippur, however, we gather with our children, parents and extended families, each with our own challenges and regrets, and we sing out together the words of the *Shema*, our commitment to the future of the Jewish People and our promise to each other. We then emotionally blurt out in unison the words *Baruch Shem*, "thank God!"

May we all be blessed with unity and the sweetest of years. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And all humans shall not be in the Tent of Assembly" (Leviticus 16:17). The Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 1:5, 5:2) derives from the seemingly redundant word "all" that even angels (whose visages are human-like) may not be present in the Temple when the High Priest enters the Inner Sanctum.

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznayim LaTorah) expresses incredulity that a mitzvah should be addressed toward angels. After all, "the Torah was not given to ministering angels" (Gemara, Brachot 25b - see also Shabbat 88b-89a).

Rabbi Sorotzkin answers that Leviticus 16:17 is actually addressed to the High Priest, who – like every person – is constantly surrounded by two angels, as per the Gemara in Ta'anit 11a. Just as Brachot 60b requires a Jew to verbally dismiss his angelic entourage before frequenting the washroom, so too does Leviticus 16:17 require the High Priest to verbally jettison his celestial sidekicks before entering (by contradistinction) the Holy of Holies. Oznayim LaTorah suggests that the philosophical rationale behind this commandment is that Shabbat 119b establishes that one of the two angels is a prosecutor, and it's forbidden to admit a prosecutor into the Holy of Holies, as per Rosh Hashanah 26a.

Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner (Ma'aseh Rav, She'iltot 128) reports that the Vilna Gaon refused to say *Barchuni Le-Shalom* on Friday nights or *Machnisei Rachamim* during Slichot, because a Jew may not pray to angels. (Presumably, the refusal is based on Rambam's fifth principle of faith. See Teshuvot Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim 166, where Rabbi Moshe Sofer evades the conundrum by lagging behind the congregation in the speed of reciting Slichot.) However, with the above analysis of Rabbi Sorotzkin, we can explain that we only pray to the Holy One, blessed Be He. No prayers are ever directed at angels. Rather, we will occasionally (when so directed by the Torah, by the sages or by custom) bark orders at angels. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

It is a Jewish tradition to wear white on Yom Kippur to appear like angels. In fact, our relationship with angels is very complicated. According to the sages, angels are our older sibling species. We have a rivalry with them for God's attention, typical of siblings. Because they are older, they have an element of guardianship over us, but they sometimes complain, as would any older sibling with their tag-along younger brother or sister. But on Yom Kippur, we imitate them because they have much to teach us.

There are rabbinic debates about the nature of angels, their categories and purposes. The most fascinating among these debates centre on the internal make-up of some angels. Many of them have conflicting essences within their core. Some consist of "fire" and "ice" at the same time. The first challenge of the angel is to reconcile the internal struggle this will produce. Both the "fire" and the "ice" must exist, so they must find a way to balance them or the angel ceases to be. The sages state that some angels can have five conflicting elements to reconcile before they can begin any Divine mission.

Once the angel has balanced and made peace internally, their next task is to balance between themselves and within the heavens. This is the learning curve of the angel, the cycle of maturity.

As their younger siblings, we are in awe of them and try to be like them. Leading up to Rosh Hashanah, we engage in self-reflection and honest internal assessments. Leading up to Yom Kippur, we seek peace with our families, friends and colleagues.

We dress in white on Yom Kippur to subtly say to God, our Parent, that if they can do it, we can do it – all we need is time. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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The CJN offices are closed:
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GUEST VOICE

Canadians in IS and the new McJihad

Joanna Baron

By all appearances, IS (the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL), the organization with a dual aim of establishing a Muslim caliphate and inflicting as much fatal violence on infidels as possible, is a sort of terrorist organization 2.0. Its members ably navigate between the gallows and Twitter, and have a savvy, dedicated media department, Al Hayat.

Recently, the IS press officer brought along a *Vice* reporter for a day in its operations – evading Assad regime snipers and frolicking with strapping, bare-chested IS fighters and their children in the Euphrates River.

Al Hayat recruits with HD video clips that are heavy on parading machine guns, rocket launchers, mines and vitriolic anti-Semitism. IS has been unusually successfully in inspiring Westerners to uproot and settle in the increasingly broad swaths it controls – from the northwestern corner of Syria to the outskirts of Baghdad – to fight alongside them. These Westerners include women from North America and Europe, who join intending to find jihadist husbands. The CIA has estimated that of IS' approximately 30,000 fighters, 15,000 are foreign recruits.

Two of the group's most prominent Western spokesmen have been Canadians. The young man tweeting under the alias Abu Turaab was revealed by the *National Post* as 23-year-old Mohammed Ali from Mississauga, Ont., (a sample tweet: "Stop threatening me with drone strikes and death. That's like threatening a fat American with a visit to McDonalds and a Big Mac.")

Then there's Timmins, Ont.'s Abu Muslim, née Andre Poulin, a Muslim convert. Poulin, who died earlier this year while participating in an IS operation, is featured in an 11-minute IS video that includes a startling juxtaposition of time-lapse Canadian wilderness stock footage with plaintive Muslim anachid (Islamic songs) and shots of fighters training.

"Before I came here," Poulin says, "I was like any other average Canadian. I went to the cottage in the summertime, I liked hockey, I liked fishing."

Poulin and Ali demonstrate conclusively that it is not poverty but ideology that precipitates terror. Ali boasted freely on Twitter about his ample salary from working in Albertan oil fields, while Poulin emphasized he had a "very good job" as a street janitor in Canada. The old bromides that the war on terror is a consequence of systemic inequalities should be discarded.

In the late '90s, the dominant way of understanding Islamic fundamentalism was as a "clash of civilizations" between medieval fundamentalists and modern seculars. Poulin's easy transplantation from Timmins to Raqqa should signal that this paradigm is outmoded.

The Canadians in IS are the new norm, not the exception. The "pied piper" of the gruesome 2005 London transport bombings, the imam nicknamed "Osama bin London," was British born and raised and worked at a popular nightclub in Soho prior to becoming radicalized. In other words, it's no longer Jihad vs. McWorld, but McJihad that the world is witnessing.

What's the hook? To a great extent, it's the narrative, laid out clearly in IS videos, of trading the banality of western life for the rugged heroism of Jihad. Poulin went from being a street janitor in Timmins to the star of an internationally notorious video.

The heavy artillery showcased in the IS recruitment videos skillfully bait disenchanted, aimless Western men. It is apt, then, that an IS recruit told the BBC in June that his new life as a fighter was "better than that (video) game Call of Duty." The combination of ideology and resources IS offers (they are indeed one of the most oil-rich terrorist groups in history) is an explosive one.

Is there any hope on the horizon? For now, the greatest threat to IS' ability to continue to recruit Westerners arises from its own savagery. When IS takes a city, it walls off public spaces, bulldozes unapproved religious sites and publicly amputates or executes those suspected of disobeying. Perhaps as time passes, the gap between IS' stated aim of restoring the caliphate, and its plain rudimentary brutalism will cause its glamour to wane. ■

Joanna Baron is a Toronto-based lawyer and writer. She clerked for the judges of the Ontario Court of Appeal in 2012-2013.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 2, 2014

Jerry Werger: JNF is more than blue boxes and trees

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Jerry Werger, recently named Jewish National Fund Canada's national president, said his latest role is "an extension" of his previous role as president of JNF Toronto.

Werger, co-owner of Werbar Investments, a residential and commercial property investment company, has been volunteering with JNF for 14 years. He spoke to *The CJN* about the role JNF serves in supporting and developing Israel, and responded to those who criticize the organization.

JNF Canada's president Jerry Werger

Why have you chosen JNF as the organization to devote your time and energy to?

The obvious answer is because JNF is focused pretty much on Israel. I guess I'm a Zionist and if I can do anything, this is what I want to do. I was involved with other organizations – B'nai Brith [Canada], Maccabi [Canada] – and I was part of the major gifts team at UJA [Federation of Greater Toronto]... Frank Wilson [a former JNF Canada president]... asked me to help him out with Jewish National Fund, and I really didn't know what JNF was all about... When I got involved, I realized that not only did I not know what JNF is, I don't think a lot of people know what JNF is all about and that has been my focus from day one.

I realized that everyone thinks that when someone dies, you plant a tree in their name from JNF, but it really isn't about that $18 tree or the tzedakah box that everyone is so familiar with. When I was a little boy, it was on the desk in my Hebrew class and at my grandparents' house. Everyone knows about that, but what they don't know is the big work that JNF is involved with in Israel. I've been on several missions with JNF in Israel and people who go on these missions are totally blown away when they see what Keren Kayemet (JNF) really does in Israel.

Of the projects JNF is developing, is there one you're most passionate or excited about?

When Gaza was turned over to the Palestinians [in the 2005 pullout], we had to move residents to new housing, and that new housing was being built in the Negev. Incredibly, it was a 15-year program that we got involved with, and Toronto has been directly involved in a couple of these settlements. One in particular is Chalutza and when you go there – I mean I've eaten in the homes... that have been built there. They're really nice houses, but unfortunately now, they are really close to the border [with Gaza], and they are being attacked.

The amazing story, what attaches us to it, is that it is right in the desert, it is right in the sand, and they brought in specialists from all over North America and they said, "This is barren land, and you absolutely cannot do anything here." And if you were to go there today, you would see that there are carrots coming out of the sand and lettuce growing. It's an incredible, incredible thing. That is some of the big stuff that JNF is involved with. The synagogue that is there was financed by Toronto families. It's pretty inspiring.

It makes what we do very worthwhile when you meet the people. We have friends there, and I'll tell you, the friends we have there, it's been really, really tough, because they called us during the war with Hamas and they begged us for help, sending us pictures. People don't realize what's going on. We have video of kids running to shelters and that's one of the things we've been doing – we've been sending money to build portable bomb shelters, and there is shrapnel on the ground and you see bullet holes or marks on the homes that we built in Chalutza. But that is just one area. That is just one thing that has gone on.

Do you have specific ambitions in your new role?

My ambitions have always been the same. My ambition with the Jewish National Fund is just to help people understand what JNF is and what our role is in the community. I know there are other agencies that bang the drum that they support Israel and they do support Israel, but no one supports Israel like JNF. [JNF Canada CEO] Josh [Cooper] has adopted the [slogan] "100 per cent Israel" and that is what it is. Our money doesn't go anywhere but to Israel. If anyone wants to support Israel, this is the place.

How does JNF respond to those who criticize its mission to buy land and develop settlements?

We're a non-political organization so we try not to get into a back and forth over these types of things, but we've heard it before that we're taking land that belongs to [Palestinians], or we're building projects on land that really belongs to Palestinians, or is in the Palestinian area, or whatever, but I've got to tell you, in a lot of cases... it's generally done through land swaps. These are not land grabs. These are arrangements that are being made, but of course, when we start doing our work in that area, the people who are living there don't really understand the arrangements that have been made. It sometimes becomes upsetting. But the strange thing is when you go there and you see what [JNF] is doing, they are taking barren areas and beautifying it, and it is really for everyone.

It's 100 per cent legal. There is no such thing as land grabs, and I know people get upset about it and think that this is part of the reason that there are problems obtaining peace in Israel, but not that I've seen.

You call yourself a Zionist and label JNF as a Zionist organization. Has the word taken on more of a negative connotation in recent years?

I don't think Zionist is a bad word, but all one needs to do is pick up a newspaper and anti-Zionism is now the replacement for anti-Semitism. No one is an anti-Semite, but they are opposed to Zionism because Zionism means that Israel is taking over land that isn't theirs... They don't use the word Jewish any longer, but they use the word Zionist.

I really think the message to get out is that JNF is really about the development of the land and the State of Israel and that we like to consider ourselves the caretakers of the Land of Israel. We don't build these projects and walk away from them. We maintain them and anyone who goes there sees the way we've beautified things.

We had one of the ministers from the Knesset here and he came over to me and he said, "It is really wonderful the work that you do because so much of our dollars go to defence. We don't have money to build parks and playgrounds and basketball courts and camps. If it weren't for Keren Kayemet, these things wouldn't exist." ■

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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Israel: A Theological Challenge

Backstory

JIMMY BITTON

In his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, William James, the greatest American philosopher and leading thinker of the late 19th century suggests something is true only insofar as it works.

In light of the radical change in the Jewish condition brought on by the creation of the Jewish state, does Christian and Muslim doctrine regarding Jews still "work?" What theological challenge does the juxtaposition of "Jewish" with "state" pose to Christian and Muslim traditions and how does each respond to the new Jewish reality?

A fundamental premise of early Christian tradition was that the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, loss of Jewish political sovereignty, and the exilic status of the Jews were all the corollary of divine punishment for Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Christ.

Furthermore, the debasement of the Jews in the world, in contrast to the rise and success of Christianity, is seen as divine testimony that Christianity replaced Judaism. It is also proof that Christianity is the new rightful heir to the title "verus Israel" (true Israel). Therefore, the creation of a Jewish state in Israel with Jerusalem as its capital abruptly challenged the inner coherence of fundamental Christian thinking vis-a-vis the Jews.

The response of the Catholic Church to this theological challenge was to suggest that the creation of Israel did not come about through divine providence. Instead, the occurrence is considered a strictly secular historical event.

Protestants are among the most ardent supporters of Israel today. Protestant doctrine, unlike Catholicism, sees this world as temporal. The return of the Jews to their homeland and the creation of a Jewish state in Israel are seen as a theological phenomenon that will help usher in the "Second Coming of Jesus." Thereafter, Jews will embrace Jesus as the Christ, which will bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Determining the impact that the creation of Israel has on the Islamic tradition is a complex undertaking. For a small number of Muslims, the way to reconcile the creation of Israel is to render the Qur'an as a pro-Zionist document. For this group, the existence of a Jewish state in Israel is supported by surah 5 verse 20-21: "...Moses said to his people, O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you possessors and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds. O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back..." For Muslims who embrace this notion, there is no theological disparity between their faith and the establishment of Israel.

On the other hand, one Islamic institution that continues to be used by radical elements sees the world divided into two camps: *Dar Al-Harb* – territory not yet under Islamic rule – and *Dar Al-Islam* – territory where Islamic Shariah law exists. Once under Islamic rule, land remains a part of *Dar Al-Islam* until "Judgement Day."

The creation of Israel poses a theological dilemma for Muslims who view the world through this prism. For them, accepting a Jewish state is tantamount to overturning this institution and accepting the subjugation of "Muslim" territory to Jewish dominion.

Even though theological considerations may prevent more radical elements in the Muslim world from accepting a Jewish state in Israel, there is a growing tendency by Muslim moderates to favour diplomatic relations with Israel for pragmatic reasons.

Aside from the obvious examples of Jordan and Egypt, Israel shares open and secret diplomatic relations with many Muslim states. In April, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said: "I'm certain that by then [2019] we will have a situation in which we have full diplomatic relations with most of the moderate Arab states."

Though mainstream Christianity currently has accepted the State of Israel, much of the Muslim world remains theologically opposed to it. Pragmatic tendencies have moved many Muslim states to overlook Islamic doctrine, but more radical elements have yet to reconcile the existence of a Jewish state on "Muslim" territory. ■

Jimmy Bitton is head of the Jewish history department at the Anne & Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Kimel Family Education Centre.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

ESTHER TEPLITSKY ז"ל

Maiden name Wolgelerenter,
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She is survived by her two sons Avery and David.

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Kanowitz, Issy	September 5, 2014	7601 Bathurst St
Karas, Ana	September 5, 2014	3000 Bathurst St.
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Lewner de Weinstock, Fanny	September 9, 2014	343 Clark Ave. W
Stark, Abe	September 10, 2014	37 Oakhurst Dr.

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Chabad converts church into synagogue

Family Shul completes renovations and moves in just in time for High Holidays.
PAGE 14

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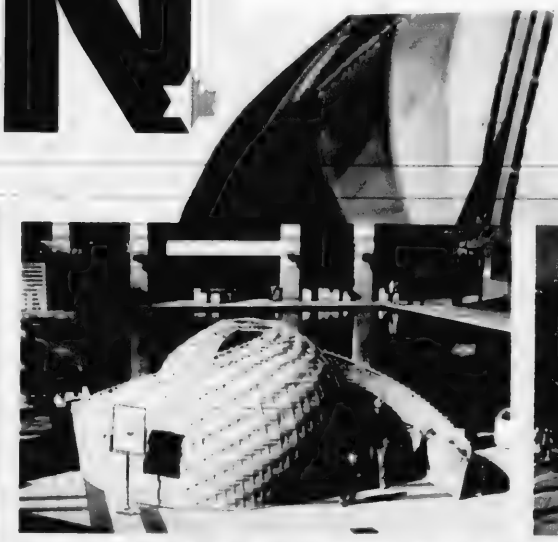

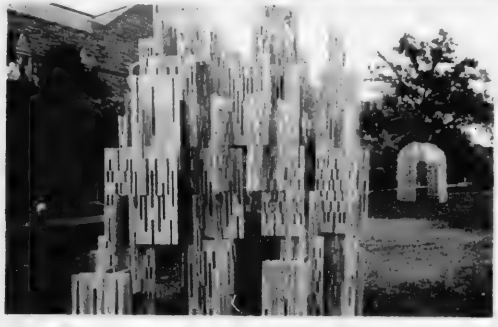

The art of sukkah building

A design contest reveals modern takes on the traditional sukkah structure, and draws attention to the need for more affordable housing. **PAGES 8 and 37.**

Doug Ford jeered at community debate

Mayoral candidate taken to task for brother Rob's use of "the 'K' word."
PAGE 24

From trauma to triumph

In Part 2 of our series on poverty, one woman tells of her housing struggles. **PAGE 18**

She's obsessed with fungus

Artist Jess Riva Cooper draws inspiration from parasitic plant life. **PAGE 42**

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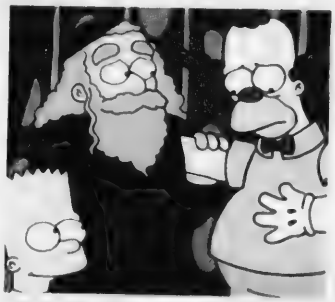
Tears of a clown, and 'Chich' made Tel Aviv swing

Shabbos App flap

The makers of a new app that promises to let observant Jews use their smartphones on Shabbat say their goal is to keep the estimated 50 per cent of Orthodox teens who are already doing so in the halachic fold. The app is being developed by Orthodox Jews in California – where else? – and will be available for $49.99 starting Feb. 15. It claims to solve halachic problems associated with using cellphones on the Sabbath, such as rising battery heat when texting. (Solution: keep battery usage at a constant level.) The app is already controversial: Rabbi Moshe Elefant of the Orthodox Union's kashrut department called it "very distasteful and not permissible on Shabbos."

Krusty mourns his dad

Will Krusty the Clown say *Kaddish* for a year? Jewish fans of the Simpsons might well be wondering after the character's father, Rabbi Hyman Krustofski – voiced by comedian Jackie Mason – died on the series' Sept. 28 season premiere. In the episode, comedians hurl insults at Krusty in a Comedy Central-style roast. Afterward, Krusty seeks out the approval of his father, who dies after saying: "If you want to know my honest opinion of you, you've always been... ech." His father's disappointment stings more than the insults, and Krusty spends the rest of the episode trying to reconcile with his father's "ech" approval rating.



RIP Rabbi Hyman Krustofski.

Former Tel Aviv mayor dies

Hundreds of people, including several ministers and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, attended the funeral of former Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat last week. Lahat, who died Oct. 1 at the age of 86, was buried in Tel Aviv's Trumpeldor Cemetery. Lahat, who was born in Berlin and immigrated to pre-state Israel in 1933, is widely credited for describing the coastal city as "a city that never stops," a tagline that for many Israelis is still synonymous with Tel Aviv today. Lahat, known as "Chich," was mayor for 19 years until 1993. He led extensive renovations and restoration projects, facilitated the opening of businesses on Shabbat and directed generous funding for the city's art scene. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

540

The number of anthropologists from around the world who, as of Oct. 6, had endorsed a boycott of Israel and its academic institutions on jadaliyya.com.

24%

Percentage of Israelis in a recent poll who say they're boycotting Arab businesses in the wake of the summer's Gaza conflict, down from 29 per cent during the war.

Quotable

The threats right now are the same threats [as] before the Gaza conflict.

— Adam Cohen, national security head, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. Full Q&A on p. 54.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Mark Mietkiewicz, our Jewish & Digital columnist, talks about how to welcome sukkah guests.

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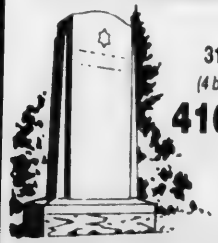

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Letters to the Editor

Hillels are reaching out

We want to thank JNF Canada CEO Josh Cooper for his thoughtful article about life on campus for Jewish students ("Being Jewish on campus a big challenge," Sept. 24). Cooper says he hopes that Jewish organizations across Canada will increase their outreach to students and help guide them through some of these challenges. As Hillel directors, we want to let concerned parents know that we are doing just that.

Every day, we have the privilege of working with bright, passionate and motivated Jewish students, and we are working hard, along with our partners at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the federations to support them as they navigate some challenging waters.

Just last week, Queen's University hosted a Size Doesn't Matter Tel Aviv beach party that gave 700 students on campus an opportunity to learn about Israel in a non-confrontational way. At Western University, frosh week activities drew significant crowds to Hillel events, and we are privileged to launch the Israel Engaged Campus Project.

There is much work to do, but Hillel professionals across the country are here to support Jewish students on campus.

Naomi Mazer, Executive Director, Western Hillel
London, Ont.
Rob Nagus, Director, Queen's Hillel
Kingston, Ont.

JNF needs attitude change

Israel, together with world Jewry, finds itself in a very difficult situation. Pernicious anti-Semitism is certainly nothing new. But the level of anti-Israel sentiment on the part of Jews is. This phenomenon exists both in the Diaspora and in Israel itself.

You have certainly addressed it well in the Sept. 24 edition. And that is why I find the flippant and arrogant attitude projected by the Jewish National Fund so troubling ("Protesters disrupt speaker at JNF event").

There are far too many Jews who share this sentiment to be dismissive of them. I don't advocate giving them a forum or allowing them to disrupt an event, but I certainly don't believe that the JNF will help Israel by adopting an arrogance better suited to the last century.

Haimy Shemtov
Toronto

A Nobel for Harper

I wish to raise my voice to support Frank Dimant's nomination of Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the Nobel Peace Prize ("Dimant's nomination of Harper for Nobel draws backlash," Sept 11).

Never in recorded history has a head of government supported our beleaguered people as Harper has. Jewish history has been at best a saga of official discrimination and at worst fatal policies against the Jews. Anti-Semitism appears to have no end. Reading the international press today, we see a resurgence of it in Europe and elsewhere.

When the world appears to be turning against the Jews once again, it is hardly the time for some Jews to criticize Dimant's well-chosen nomination of Harper for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In Harper there appears a leader of an admired democratic nation who is outspokenly supportive of the Jewish People, for which we should be doubly grateful in the face of a hostile United Nations.

Lita-Rose Betcherman
Toronto

Defining Judaism

I appreciated much of the article "In defence of cultural Judaism" by Rabbi Denise Handlarski, which is very positive in expressing the essence of Humanistic Judaism (Sept. 4).

However, I'm surprised and somewhat disturbed by referring to Humanistic Judaism as cultural Judaism. It is displeasing to have it compartmentalized in this way. It is, to my way of thinking, another stream of Judaism.

For my husband and me, being Jewish is intrinsic to our way of life. Languages, history, religion and the richness of our literature all comprise our Jewish heritage. Using Yiddish, Hebrew, singing songs and even reciting certain prayers as part of the tradition give us pleasure. Intrinsic motivation causes us to celebrate the High Holidays and Passover. Lighting Shabbat candles feels spiritual and connects us with Jews all over the world and throughout the ages.

The term "cultural Jew" should either be eliminated altogether or perhaps attributed to individuals for whom Judaism does not play an integral role.

Jocelyn Cooper
Thornhill, Ont.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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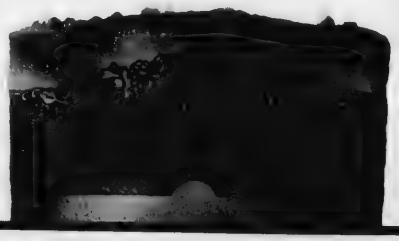

RABBI·2·RABBI

Finding joy in the sukkah

Sukkot encourages us to discover a Jewish world beyond our comfort zones, and show that we can be happy even without material things

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: I love decorating my sukkah. My children make the requisite paper-link chains and wall decorations, and we adorn the walls of the sukkah with posters that depict great chassidic rebbes, scenes of Jerusalem and other iconic Jewish images.

One of my favourite posters brings a mishnah to life: "Yehuda ben Taima said, be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to the will of your Father in Heaven." The poster depicts each of these animals in their respective boldness, lightness, swiftness, and strength. The objective is that one who enters the sukkah will be surrounded by wisdom and inspiration.

Rabbi Cutler: Most people don't get excited when the new Jewish calendar arrives in the mail from their insurance broker. Yet, my family's tradition was to use the pictures from the calendar to cover the walls in our sukkah. The physical structure was always the same, but the decorations changed from year to year (though paper chains, newly made, were always a staple).

Some of my earliest childhood memories are of decorating the sukkah, and I vividly recall helping my father shlep the wooden frame from the garage and spending what seemed like hours putting them together in our backyard.

Sukkot today doesn't seem as cold as it did 25 years ago – perhaps global warming is to blame. I recall being bundled into my ski jacket, hat and gloves, and warming myself with my mother's mushroom barley soup.

Rabbi Scheier: There is a great teaching of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach about *Neilah*, the closing prayer of Yom Kippur, which literally means "locking" and traditionally describes the closing of the gates of prayer before the conclusion of Yom Kippur.

Rabbi Carlebach taught that our prayers can't only be, "God, don't lock me out!" They also have to be, "God, don't lock me in!" Meaning, don't lock me into the synagogue and relegate my spiritual experience to the confines of our Jewish institutions. Let me meander outside and see how my Jewish experience interacts with the world beyond my synagogue

To me, this is the message of Sukkot. It's an encounter with a world beyond our comfort zone. While we build all of these structures, edifices, and organizations to ease and facilitate our Jewish lives, our Judaism is deep and real – it can survive outside of our familiar communal and structural contexts.

I also believe the sukkah contains some of the joys of new discovery. We look around, taking in all that is unfamiliar (and perhaps even a bit uncomfortable). The cold, the branches overhead, the bees (when the weather is warm), the chairs perched on an angle because our driveway or backyard is sloped – all of these aspects combine to create a novel experience.

Once again, we are youthful as we explore this different, transient world – it is wonderful and amazing and new. There is an exciting element of discovery when setting up camp in a new location, even if that location is on one's own property.

Rabbi Cutler: Don Isaac Abravanel points out that on Passover and Shavuot, the Jews who flocked to Jerusalem were permitted to leave after only one day to return to their homes and their crops. Not so for Sukkot, during which all Jews were required to stay in Jerusalem for seven days. Sukkot marked the end of the growing season. The farmer could take a little time off without worrying that she or he was needed back in the fields.

Among the messages of Sukkot is that we should be happy. Sukkot is "*zman simchateinu*," the time of our joyfulness. It is a time to be outdoors and remind ourselves that even without many material things, we can be happy. It is a time when we should be with families and communities, just as our ancestors were in Jerusalem.

Especially for rabbis in the immediate aftermath of our "busy season," Sukkot is a great time to appreciate nature, to read outdoors, to study for the sake of study, to eat, to relax, and to spend quality time with family and friends. ■

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CJN

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From the Archives | Chag Samayach

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Three residents of Baycrest in Toronto decorate a sukkah in 1970.

SeeJN | I want to ride my bicycle

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Children ride their bicycles in their Tel Aviv neighbourhood on Yom Kippur.

From Yoni's Desk

A solution to flying the not-so-friendly skies

In March, the Knesset passed a law requiring that more ultra-Orthodox men serve in the Israel Defence Forces. The initiative carried wide support across Israel, where haredi exclusion from the army has long been a point of tension, but many remained skeptical the ultra-Orthodox could be convinced to serve in significant numbers. After all, the haredi community has found ways to resist conscription attempts in the past, even if previous legislation was never as constraining as the new "Sharing the Burden" law.

But according to army figures, 1,972 ultra-Orthodox enlisted during the 2013-2014 conscription round, up from 1,416 in 2012-2013 and 1,327 in 2011-2012. It remains unclear whether expanded ultra-Orthodox army recruitment is being driven by the new law or a realization in the community that the system of state funding for haredim is in the process of significant overhaul. The 2013-2014 statistic also falls far short of the 3,800 ultra-Orthodox recruits required by law. Still, the healthy increase is encouraging.

Haredi inclusion in the army is presenting another benefit: more ultra-Orthodox men are joining the workforce when their service ends. New statistics from Israel's Ministry of Economy show that in the first half of this year, 2,135 ultra-Orthodox men utilized government-run job-placement programs – three times higher than during the same period last year.

Perhaps these positive signs of integration can be instructive when it comes to another recent skirmish involving the ultra-Orthodox.

An El Al flight from New York to Tel Aviv was delayed recently by haredi men who refused to take their assigned seats next to female passengers (see page 38). The flight eventually got off the ground, but one passenger called the ensuing trip an "11-hour nightmare." The incident prompted an online petition calling on El Al to "Stop the bullying, intimidation and discrimination against women" on its fights. It had more than 3,500 signatures at press time.

Chicagoan Sharon Shapiro, the woman behind the campaign, has a valid point. It is unquestionably discriminatory for a man – ultra-Orthodox or otherwise – to demand a seat-change based on the sex of his skyward neighbour. Stories of haredi men on El Al flights assuming a sort of frantic belligerence when they realize they've been seated next to a woman are not uncommon. That sort of behaviour is off-putting and annoying, and not only to female travellers.

Some have argued the solution is to force ultra-Orthodox men to sit in the seats assigned to them, no trades allowed. Indeed, why should there be different rules for different passengers? If the next haredi man who caused a delay on an El Al flight was promptly handcuffed by security and hauled off for interrogation, the message would get out quickly.

A firm approach to ultra-Orthodox intransigence is succeeding (albeit slowly) when it comes to the army. It could on El Al flights, too. But maybe there's a compromise that benefits everyone: men-only rows available to haredim (and any other men, for that matter) on El Al flights to and from Israel – at a premium, of course. This just might work. Because the last thing anyone wants during an extended plane ride is an unfriendly traveller in the next seat over. ■ — YONI

REFLECTIONS

Finding my new cousin

Beth Rosen

The minute I heard Richard's voice on the phone, I felt his warmth, humour and openness.

"Who are you?" he asked.

I took a breath.

"My name is Beth Rosen and I'm calling from New York. If your mother was Mary Rosenstrauch and she was born in Tarnapol, Poland and you were born in a DP camp in 1946, I'm your cousin."

He laughed. "You know more than some of my friends know."

When I was a child, I heard how Mary, my father's first cousin, escaped certain death by jumping from a cattle car headed to a concentration camp. Her experience, pretending to be Catholic and working in a slave labour camp during the war, made such an impression on me I decided to write her novel for young readers.

When I finished the book, I wanted to try to find Mary's grave in Toronto but I didn't know her last name. My cousin Joan, who had met Mary once back in 1957, helped me with some of the details for the book. I was extremely sad when Joan told me that Mary pretended to be Catholic and married a Catholic man in the DP camp and never told her two sons she was Jewish. I was determined to find her grave because Joan said one of Mary's sons put a Jewish star on her gravestone after learning she was Jewish.

All I knew about her married name was that it began with a C and ended with an I. At first, as impossible as it sounded, I thought I would go to all the Catholic Polish cemeteries in Toronto and search all the gravestones. Fortunately, a friend connected me with a researcher at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Beth Rosen with Richard Czerwinski.

Two days later, I received 28 documents with Mary's name and her family's names. I stared at her signature. I was overjoyed when I saw Mary's signature as if I was meeting her for the first time. Then, I saw a birth certificate. Her son Richard Czerwinski was born in 1946.

With a great deal of luck, I found his phone number and we were both thrilled to speak that day in May. I have just spent a few days with Richard and his wife Jan, a Jewish woman from New York. They welcomed Maryann, my partner, and me as new family members to their lovely home in Dundas, Ont. I learned that when they were in their 40s, Mary told them she had something important to discuss before they went to a gathering at her friend's home.

"I have been acting my whole life. I'm a Jewish woman."

Richard and Jan sat motionless as she described for the first time how she survived the war. That night at Mary's Jewish friend's home she recited the Hebrew prayer as she lit the Shabbos candles. Richard and Jan stared at her in disbelief. They had heard hints about her upbringing but it was the first time she was so open about her past.

As we talked that first night of our visit, Richard told me about his mother.

"Her parents named her Sala, and she was also called Sola as well before she changed her name to Mary in order to pretend she was Catholic."

I smiled. "What a pretty name. I heard you put a Jewish star on her gravestone."

He looked at me for moment and then said, "After my father died, she had a close friend named Stanley. When my mother died, Stanley told us she wanted to have a Jewish star put on her stone." He paused and added. "We've talked about doing it but haven't done it yet." I was disappointed but didn't say a word.

The next day we drove to the cemetery. I placed the stones that I had recently taken from my grandfather's grave in a New York cemetery on Mary's gravestone. Then, I took one stone by her grave and put it in my pocket so I could leave it on my grandfather's gravestone when I returned to New York. Richard silently watched me a few paces away. Then, he walked over and gently touched her gravestone.

Just before we left the cemetery, Richard said he wanted to go to the cemetery's office. He introduced himself to the woman behind the main desk and told her he would like to add something to his mother's gravestone. She checked her computer for the gravesite and determined he was indeed her son. She took a pen and pad out and asked what he wanted to do.

"I want to add a Jewish star above her name."

Just over 70 years after Mary jumped from the train, her son helped her return to her Jewish roots.

Without any hesitation, the woman looked down at the pad and wrote what he said.

Mary with her husband Jan and son Richard in a DP camp in 1946.

"How long will it take?" Richard asked.

"Seven to eight weeks."

She gave him the price and said she would email him all the information and he and his brother needed to sign it and then return the forms to her office.

As we left, I asked his wife if my visit caused him to make that decision.

"Oh no. He has wanted to do that ever since Stanley told him she wanted that on her stone."

Not only has Mary's wish come true but Richard and I now have a lot of catching up to do. He will soon be meeting a host of new relatives who can't wait to welcome him into their homes. ■

Beth Rosen is a psychotherapist, adjunct college professor and writer. She just completed a young adult novel about Mary's experience during the war. She lives in New York City.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Sukkahville contest draws attention to affordable housing

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

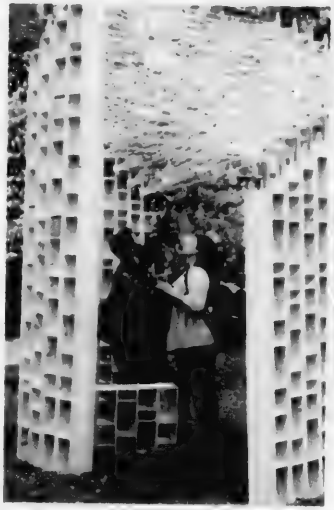
They call themselves a well-kept secret in the Jewish community, but on Oct. 14 and 15 – right around the end of Sukkot – they plan to increase their profile as "the official housing agency of the Jewish community."

The Kehilla Residential Programme will hold its fourth annual "Sukkahville" international design competition, at Nathan Phillips Square in downtown Toronto.

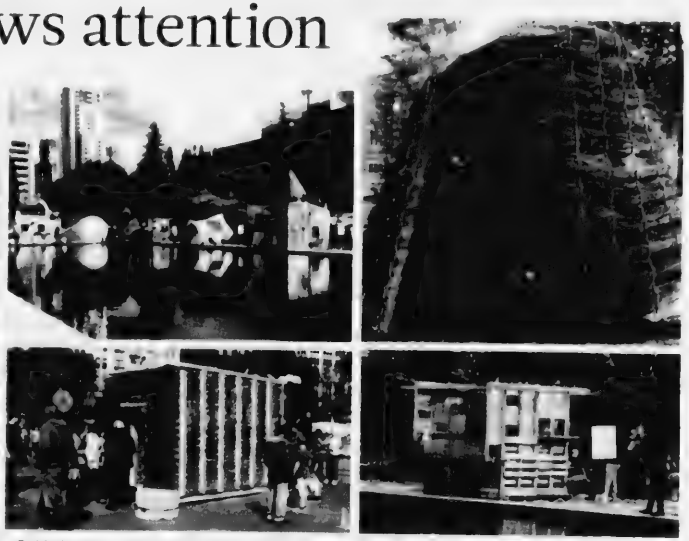
Eight architecturally unique sukkahs will be on display, chosen from 80 applicants, attesting to the interest and creativity of designers, said Nancy Singer, executive director of the agency.

What's more, the competition and exhibit is meant to draw attention to the issue of affordable housing, she said.

Kehilla was established in 1982 and is affiliated with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. It has 338 units in three buildings along the Bathurst Street corridor, "under the Kehilla umbrella," of which 228 are subsidized. The organization also provides property management services for other groups, Singer said.



A sukkah from the Sukkah City contest in 2011 at Washington University in St. Louis.



Sukkahville 2013 in Toronto, top left, and sukkahs from New York's Sukkah City in 2010.
MURRYE BERNARD PHOTOS. BOTTOM AND TOP RIGHT

As Singer describes it, the needs are great and the resources are modest. There are some 1,000 people in the Jewish community on a waiting list for affordable housing. People can wait from six to 10 years from the date they apply.

"We don't have a lot of product in our inventory," she added.

The issues of subsidized housing and homelessness were addressed last month at a public forum at Congregation Darchei Noam, Toronto's only Reconstructionist synagogue. Singer was one of several presenters who outlined the plight of those living without a permanent home.

Councillor Joe Mihevc called affordable housing a human right, and "human rights trumps everything. Civilized societies build structures of human rights and defend them. All residents should have safe, secure and well maintained homes," he said.

Mihevc, who represents Ward 21, St. Paul's West, said society benefits when people have adequate housing. Homeless people do what they must to survive, and that can include living in stairwells and stealing food. Mihevc presented an economic case for social housing, saying homeless people cost society more through increased health care and police interventions than they would if they were provided with adequate housing, he said.

It costs only $23 a day to house someone, but $665 a day to hospitalize them, $142 a day if they are in prison and $63 a day to maintain them in shelters.

It makes financial sense to house people in permanent residences, he concluded.

More than $800 million has been allocated by the city to renovating and repairing its housing stock of 30,000 units. But it will cost $2.6 billion to bring the city's housing up to snuff and he called on the provincial and federal levels of government to come up with the rest.

The waiting list for subsidized units has grown to 85,000 from 65,000, he added.

Relating the housing issue to the season, Rabbi Tina Grimberg said that during Sukkot, Jews are enjoined to put up temporary dwellings, open to the elements. In ancient Israel, Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs "knew what homelessness was." Living in a temporary shelter in a place like the Negev "is a cold reality," she said.

But today, when people reside in a sukkah and look at the stars above, they're picnicking. "We all have a place to go."

Others are not so lucky. "All people are created in the image of God, so it's up to us to be sure everyone has a home to go to."

Sukkahville "is an important message about the need for permanent, affordable housing," Singer said.

Last year, the agency raised $104,000 through Sukkahville and this year organizers have set a target of $180,000, half of which has already been raised.

In addition to operating and managing non-profit residential buildings, Kehilla is assisting 20 families – referred to it from Jewish social service agencies – with rent subsidies. It hopes to add 10 more in 2015.

Kehilla launched its rental assistance program in 2011 "to bridge the gap between market rental rates and what a Jewish person in need can afford."

There is a premium cost to living near or along the Bathurst corridor, Singer said.

Low income families are eligible for up to $300 in monthly housing support. With the extra income, the families are more able "to live Jewishly," she added. ■

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Positive ways to engage with Israel on campus

Gil Troy

As the academic year begins, many are justifiably nervous about an anti-Israel onslaught launched by an unholy alliance of the far left with "far gone" Islamist extremists. The anti-Israel fanatics who support Hamas and seek to destroy the Jewish state will use these radical "useful idiots" as enablers. They will hijack human rights rhetoric to perpetuate human wrongs against the Jewish People.

And while most students will ignore these campus histrionics, impressionable Jewish students who want to be liked and to be hip, and are sincerely troubled by some of the tough decisions Israel is forced to make, will be swept into this anti-Israel whirlwind. Moreover, for some, kicking the Jewish state becomes a way to flout their parents.

In response, many pro-Israel Jews will fall into the advocacy trap, making every conversation about Israel defensive, tense and about the Palestinians. Why we are so willing to fight on their terms, to help them define Israel only by its problems, astounds me. And that we allow them to set the agenda, without understanding that we need to build a deeper, more positive, multi-dimensional connection to Israel, depresses me.

Here are some positive ways to engage Israel on campus. First, for those who are political – go broad. We need a left-to-right coalition affirming Israel's right to exist. Liberal peaceniks should be infuriated by "apartheid weeks" and the rhetoric of so-called "moderates" accusing Israel of "genocide" – when the Palestinian population grows every year.

Each false, extreme accusation injects more poison into the air, embedding one more obstacle in the path of any trust, compromise or progress toward peace. Accusations of "apartheid" caricature a national conflict as a racial conflict. Accusations of genocide ignore the fact that while we mourn each life lost, a thousand civilian casualties (and another thousand military casualties) reflect Israel's remarkable military discipline.

Students should talk about Existential Israel, explaining why the Jewish state exists – because Jews are a people not just a community of faith, because that people has deep, lasting ties to one particular homeland, and because the history of oppression against Jews proves what happens when our rights are ignored and we lack a state.

Students should teach about Fraternal Israel, a sister democracy to the United States and Canada. Note: these are siblings not twins. Each democracy strikes its own balance between universalism and particularism, the individual and the group, an ethnic-religious base and a more cosmopolitan foundation.

Students should contemplate Spiritual Israel, the magical place that spawned Judaism, Christianity – and, in a way, western civilization itself – and continues to stretch and enrich the soul.

Students should celebrate Inspirational Israel, the modern state built on the hills and plains of the sacred Land of Israel. This ancient-modern Altneuland is one of the wonders of the world, functioning as a democracy in a harsh neighbourhood, saving lives with miracle inventions and thriving as a dynamic, growing society.

Students should emphasize Aspirational Israel, the fact that the Zionist movement first focused on founding the state and is now tasked with perfecting it. As a form of liberal democratic nationalism, Zionism has a mission to challenge, to stretch, to help Israel serve as a light unto the nations, fixing flaws and building on strengths.

And, finally, Jewish students should enjoy Familial Israel, the fact that Israel is today's greatest collective Jewish project. As Jews, we have this historic opportunity to contribute our sweat, our souls, our ideas and actions, our support and critiques, to preserve and perfect our Jewish state.

I do not fear debates about the rights and wrongs of what Israel should do regarding the Palestinians. But I reject Yasser Arafat's conceit, which was to make everything about Israel be about him – and them. It's time for us to have our conversation, on our terms, about our remarkable Jewish state, asking what it does and can mean to us – and to others – seeking inspiration and helping it fulfil its loftiest aspirations. ■

Spreading our tent of peace

Sara Horowitz

In the middle of the summer, we lost our sweet dog Madeira. Within a few weeks, we noticed that the neighbourhood had changed. Raccoons bounded up our trees, nestling in divided trunks. They dug holes in our lawn, and sauntered up to us as we dined on the patio. Squirrels left gnawed bagels and cookies in our shrubs and tossed the soil from our container plants, scattering it about. Something unseen howled at night. The occasional skunk scurried away as we flicked on the outdoor lights, its white on black streak disappearing into a neighbour's hedge. We found overturned flowerpots, uprooted herbs.

Word spread quickly in the urban wilderness we inhabit: the territory was available. For almost 14 years, Madeira's presence – her bark, her scent, her puppy-like exuberance until her last days – marked our space as hers. She kept the critters at bay. Without her, apparently, the territory was up for grabs.

I thought of Madeira as Sukkot approached, and not only because the holiday brings us out into the backyard again after the season for al fresco dining has wound down, or because she would warm our feet in the sukkah in the cool Canadian autumn evenings, or because she would settle just outside the sukkah entryway keeping guard. Something about the way our backyard changed in her absence reminded me of Sukkot. Specifically, it made me think about the way in which the presence of a sukkah changes every place where it is not.

Most reflections on the nature of sukkot focus on its temporary nature – its fragility, impermanence and permeability. But for me, there has always been something more striking about erecting a sukkah. It's the way that using it radically alters your perception of familiar space. The sukkah changes your relationship to everything about your home that is not the sukkah – that is, everything that is everyday and, if not permanent, then longstanding.

It is not simply a matter of eating in your sukkah, but of not eating in your dining room or kitchen, which for eight days becomes simply a corridor through which you bring food prepared indoors into the shelter that is neither indoor space nor outdoor space, but a bit of both. Guests arrive at your home only to pass through it, a conduit to your temporary hut. Or they might bypass your house altogether and go straight to the sukkah. The warmth, comfort, expansiveness and elegance of your home become irrelevant as you entertain in a chilled and compact space decorated with an eclectic collection of homemade, purchased, new, preserved or slightly weather-worn objects. The sukkah is full, and your home, empty.

In other words, the presence of the sukkah outside defamiliarizes the space inside. It brings you to recognize the fluidity and ephemeralness of the structure you ordinarily think of as most fixed. Nothing is permanent.

There is something about mortality in all this. But there is also something about renewal, about change. There is an invitation to try and shift perspective, and in so doing, to open up of possibilities we might have not seen before.

Our liturgy asks of the Divine to spread over us "sukkat shalom" – a shelter, tent, canopy of peace – not a fort, citadel, bastion, fortification or rampart. The strength suggested by fixed structures are necessary for protection during war. But the ability of the sukkah to set everything around it in flux suggests that shifting perspective can bring us to peace – that implacable enemies and intractable situations may morph in ways we can't yet foresee, but we might be able to bring about.

And as I pause in front of the sukkah door and look out at the section of our urban forest that I call my backyard, it occurs to me that perhaps the panoply of animals were not out to claim Madeira's territory as their own. Perhaps they had just come to pay their respects. ■

Anti-Semitism and anti-Israel aren't mutually exclusive

Michael Taube

There are certain debates and discussions that many ethnic and religious communities don't want to have – or refuse to have. The prevailing position therefore becomes rigid and virtually impossible for future generations to penetrate.

Here's a prime example. Canada's Jewish community fiercely believes a major component of anti-Semitism is an intense dislike or even hatred of the State of Israel.

If you're aware of anything I've ever written or said, you'll know that I'm neither anti-Semitic nor anti-Israel. At the same time, I would argue that being anti-Semitic and anti-Israel aren't mutually exclusive.

Let's deconstruct this point a bit further.

Yes, most anti-Semites are anti-Israel. If an individual hates Jews, it almost goes without saying this hatred would naturally extend to a Jewish homeland. So, these two positions are inherently linked for a certain percentage of the population.

At the same time, it's possible for an individual to dislike or resent some, most or all of Israel's political, economic and cultural positions without disliking or resenting Jews.

Significant portions of the Jewish left and anti-Zionist left have deep concerns about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud government. They dislike everything from his small "c" conservative values to his hawkish positions.

Many of the same individuals have been troubled by the actions of previous governments headed not only by Likud, but also Labor and Kadima. In a nutshell, they perceive the average Israeli politician as being aggressive, militaristic and decidedly "un-Jewish," irrespective of political stripe.

Meanwhile, Jewish leftists (along with various non-Jewish leftists) have taken active positions or roles in criticizing Israel and supporting a free Palestine. They don't mince their words, and have used language, both cryptic and public, that has shocked many Canadians.

This has led some people to call them "self-hating" Jews – or worse.

For what it's worth, I find that most of the Jewish left and non-Jewish left's statements about Israel range from disagreeable to detestable. I don't share their worldview, and I perceive many of their positions on foreign affairs, the Middle East, security and safety, and the war on terrorism to be remarkably juvenile and ignorant.

I would imagine that many *CJN* readers, and supporters of organizations like the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and B'nai Brith Canada, would express similar concerns and positions.

That's not the point, however. If you believe in freedom of speech, as I strongly do, you should be defending their right to hold, discuss and debate these controversial views.

Many so-called free speech "defenders" regularly change their tune when they hear about ideas they find offensive, or that don't fit in with their particular belief system.

Well, guess what? If that's what you do, you're actually not onside on freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech is the defence of ideas that are objective and objectionable. In other words, a democratic society has to support views that appear right to us – and tolerate views that appear wrong to us. We don't have to agree with an opposing viewpoint, but we must defend a person's right to support a particular position in a nonviolent manner.

Let's end this column by answering two questions.

First, do some people disguise their anti-Semitism by using freedom of speech as a shield to criticize Israel? Of course. Yet, in most cases, it's remarkably easy to distinguish between pro-Palestinian supporters who are repulsed at Israeli military endeavours – and unsophisticated bigots who believe Jews control everything from high finance to the press.

Second, does every criticism of Israel and Jews constitute anti-Semitism? Of course not. I believe Israel is an imperfect nation, and that many Jews should be embarrassed for having historically seen the world through left-wing political blinkers.

If this makes me anti-Semitic or anti-Israel, I'm going to have a great deal of company very soon. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times columnist, and a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Fighting anti-Semitism in the activist community

Paul Estrin

I never used to take Tashlich seriously. But lately, my pockets were feeling heavier than usual.

Being a Jewish activist in an anti-Israel activist world is difficult, to say the least. I know how degrading and demoralizing – how painful – it can be. You learn to turn a blind eye to so much vile vitriol because you're trying to fight for what is just and right. My recent history with the Green Party of Canada (GPC), the political party I was president of before being summarily tossed because of my views on Israel, is illustrative of a larger problem in the activist world.

After I published a blog post on the party website entitled "Why Gaza makes me sad," I was pilloried within the party. Many of the responses to my essay were blatantly anti-Semitic. A letter posted to the website Unpublished Ottawa argued, "It is abundantly clear to me that he (meaning me) is a Zionist shill." The letter claimed Jews "have taken control of most of our major institutions, including the media, the banks, and the government," and described my religion as a "supremacist cult." "Remember who did 9/11 – the same criminal state which is now destroying Gaza," the writer intoned.

The letter was penned by Monika Schaefer, a Green candidate in the last federal election whose participation in the party dates back to its founding convention. It was posted online by Peter Johnston, a former member of the party's board of directors.

It gets worse.

A poster was uploaded to radicalpress.com (its motto: "Digging to the root of the issues since 1998"). At first glance, it looks like your typical Green Party newsletter, featuring a picture of Elizabeth May in the top right corner and the party logo in both English and French. Except that there's a Magen David next to the logo, and the text below it is revolting. "Yes all you gullible goy Canadians," it begins, "the Green Party of Canada kisses Israel's ass… So you thought you had a choice did you? Well I guess you were all just too 'green' to realize that the Zionist Jews control all of us and we do their bidding whether you like it or not."

It was signed, falsely, "Shalom, Paul Estrin."

There's a lot more like that. But you get the idea.

Sadly, my experience is not unique. Many people who have endured similar hatred have approached me in recent months to recount their own horror stories. I thank you for sharing – it helped me, and I hope it helped you.

But all of this raises the question: why do people like me continue to affiliate ourselves with the activist community? I don't have a full answer, but part of it is out of a desire to create a safe and productive space for Jewish activists to perform tikkun olam. I still believe that's a cause worth fighting for.

I went to Israel recently, on a trip sponsored by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) that included people from all over Canada, MPs and MLAs. We all witnessed first-hand how Israel continues to advance in so many positive ways – economically, politically, and socially. And we were reminded of Israel's security concerns – from the empty schoolyards of Sderot, to the consistent thud of shells emanating from Syria, just 30 kilometres away, the threat could not be clearer.

I also met with Israeli activists, and for the first time in a long time, I felt what it was like to not feel insecure because I'm Jewish and support Israel. I only wish I could have brought that feeling back to all the Jewish activists doing excellent work outside Israel who feel the sting of hatred.

Returning to Canada, I feel ready to move forward. It's been a rough summer, but it's time to focus on the future. My pockets are empty. ■

Paul Estrin is former president of the Green Party of Canada.

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Jewish population grows, but so do poverty, intermarriage

National survey points to challenges for community planning

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The information in the Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA's 2011 National Household Survey suggests that while Canada's Jewish population is slowly growing, fewer Canadian Jews are identifying as ethnically Jewish, intermarriage and poverty rates are rising, and Jewish seniors outnumber Jewish young adults.

Canada's Jewish population grew by 4.7 per cent to 391,665 in 2011, from 374,060 in 2001, accounting for 1.2 per cent of the Canadian population.

About 58 per cent of Canada's Jews live in Ontario, 23.9 per cent are in Quebec, 8.9 per cent are in British Columbia, 4 per cent in Alberta, 3.7 per cent in Manitoba, and 1.6 per cent of Canadian Jews reside in Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan and the territories.

Linda Kislowicz, president and CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA, said she's pleasantly surprised that Jewish populations in smaller cities aren't declining.

"We're not seeing decline in those areas to the extent that we thought we would. There is some stability, there is even some small growth in some places, like Vancouver… There has been growth in some of our communities for sure. There is some in Toronto, there is a little bit of decline in Montreal, but there is growth in other places," Kislowicz said. "There's a small, but not inconsiderable reverse trend of people who want to live in smaller places. I don't think we're seeing growth, but we were expecting to see more decline."

Although Canada's Jewish population is growing, fewer Jews are identifying as ethnically Jewish.

According to the survey, in 1991, 369,600 people identified as ethnically Jewish, and 318,185 identified as religiously Jewish. But in 2011, 309,650 identified as ethnically Jewish, and religious identification increased to 329,500.

"There are so many factors, including how people fill out forms and what their country of origin was that can influence [the numbers]. For example, for Jews from the former Soviet Union, there are many variables there," Kislowicz said.

The report also shed light on the issue of intermarriage in Canada, and while the Canadian rate of 25 per cent is far behind the U.S. rate of 58 per cent, as reported in a Pew Research Centre survey conducted last year, Kislowicz warned that Canadian Jews should not be complacent.

"It's true that our numbers are not at the same level as the Americans, and that's great, but they're at a level that we need to take seriously and look at in two ways. One, from the perspective of how we build inclusive communities and make families feel comfortable, and two, from the perspective of how we develop strong Jewish identity," she said. "The Jewish identity part is really the part we have to undertake in the most creative and strong, committed way possible… If you're engaged in something, you will treat it with value. A Jewish educated and engaged person is more likely to want to continue to connect and participate."

The survey said the intermarriage rate for couples under 30 years of age is 43 per cent. More than 72,000 Jews live in intermarried households in Canada, including 15,490 children, more than half of whom are being raised without any religious affiliation.

Linda Kislowicz

"I think the [intermarriage rate] is a number we really have to keep an eye on, particularly segmenting out [those] under 30, and that is where we will learn whether it is growing or not. That is an analysis that remains to be done. We are not there yet. But we can't be complacent," Kislowicz said.

When it comes to the community's aging population, Kislowicz said the Jewish community, like the general population, is seeing the effects of the baby boomer phenomenon. The survey found 109,515 Jews in the 45 to 65 age group, and 92,200 Jews age 25 to 44. There are 66,280 Jews who are 65 or older, while those in the 15- to 24-year-old age group number 52,390.

Speaking about the implications of a Jewish community that has a larger aging population than its young adult population, she said, "I think there is a community planning challenge with respect to engaging young people, educating them, engaging them, connecting with them communally, philanthropically, etc., so that they can take over the reins of leading our communities.

"We know that developmentally, there is typically a period of less engagement before there is more engagement again, as young people are finding their mates and their careers and settling down and that kind of stuff, so we have to ensure that we are on their radar and they understand and take on their communal obligations, or even see them as obligations."

The survey also identified poverty as a key issue. There are 57,195 Jews living below the poverty line, which translates to 14.6 per cent of Canada's Jews, compared to 14.8 per cent among the wider Canadian population. Since 2001, the Jewish poverty rate has increased from 13.6 per cent.

"The poverty rates for the Jewish population in Canada is 14.6 per cent, and there is quite a range from coast to coast, with Montreal being the highest [at 20 per cent]. That speaks to the elderly population – they have a high concentration of elderly and poor," Kislowicz explained.

"I was the Jewish Family Services' director in Montreal from 1993 to 2002, and in those years, the poverty rate was about 18 to 19 per cent, so it's been high for a long time."

Ottawa has the lowest rate of Jewish poverty of Canada's major cities, at 8.9 per cent. Vancouver sits at 16.1 per cent, Toronto at 12.9, and Calgary at 10.8. Those most likely to live in poverty are people on welfare or disability benefits, children living with single mothers, Holocaust survivors – especially if they're disabled and/or live alone – and recent immigrants. ■

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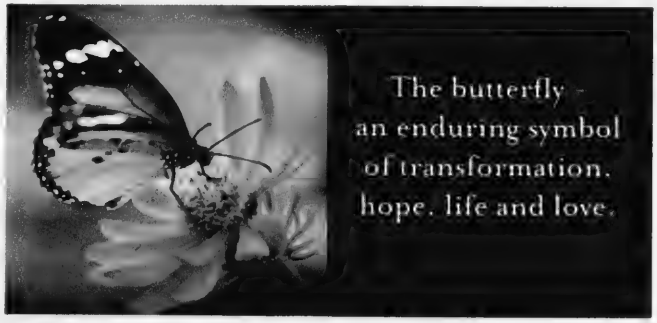

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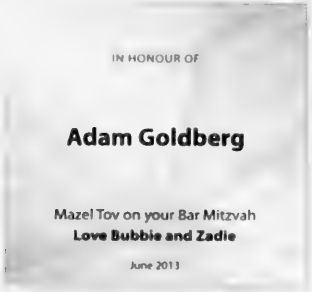

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Family Shul scrambled to get ready for holidays

PAUL LUNGEN
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Rabbi Menachem Gansburg in front of the newly renovated shul, left, and the original church building. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTOS

It was like a good old fashioned barn-raising right in the middle of Toronto's Ledbury Park, only this time it wasn't a farm family getting help, but a congregation's spiritual home getting a physical facelift.

People in the community – many of them not members of the congregation – pitched in by donating lighting, flooring and other necessities to help The Family Shul convert its building from a church into a synagogue in time for the High Holidays.

The project, which included new flooring, lighting, carpeting, heating and cooling system, drywall, painting and more, included removing Christian symbols and replacing them with Jewish ones. The distinctive white crosses on the building's front doors were removed and windows installed bearing the Star of David.

The renovations would normally take at least three months, but it was completed in just 2-1/2 weeks.

"It's really like a miracle," said Sula Kogan, who operates King's and Queen's Custom Homes. Kogan is a builder who volunteered her services to co-ordinate the renovation on behalf of the shul.

The Chabad synagogue was a beehive of activity, with workers figuratively and literally stepping over each other to get the job done on time, she said. Even the tradespeople, with whom she maintains longstanding relationships and who are not Jewish, pitched in by making themselves available on short notice and by not charging overtime or for a rush job, Kogan said.

They helped make the rabbi's vision come true, she added.

The spiritual leader she referred to is Rabbi Menachem Gansburg, whose vision is to provide the heavily Jewish neighbourhood with a modern, up-to-date version of the small, intimate houses of worship that were once common in European shtetls.

When The Family Shul first began offering Sabbath and High Holiday services, they were conducted in rented school premises in the neighbourhood, Rabbi Gansburg said.

But finding a permanent home was always a priority. In 2012, the congregation's search for a building coincided with the desire of the congregation of the Brooke Avenue Baptist Church to move. The church, located at Falkirk Street and Brooke Avenue, had been a mainstay in the community since 1951.

As the Hungarian Baptist congregation prepared a new facility in Woodbridge, The Family Shul waited to occupy the premises. In the meantime, it erected a 2,000-square-foot modular structure alongside the existing brick building, to house a preschool.

On Sept. 14, the Baptist congregation gave notice it was leaving the building. The Family Shul had only 2-1/2 weeks in which to renovate the structure and remove all Christian symbols in time for Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Gansburg said.

With financial assistance from supporters, interest-free loans from others, along with donations from lighting, flooring, electrical and other suppliers, as well as the co-ordination provided by Kogan, the Family Shul made the transformation in time for the holidays.

About 300 people attended services on Rosh Hashanah, some in the main sanctuary, others in the social hall downstairs, and kids in the modular building.

"We had standing room only," Rabbi Gansburg said.

Rabbi Gansburg said the congregation is enjoying phenomenal growth. Shabbat services and those on Sunday attract 75 people, while a total of 200 people, mostly within walking distance of the synagogue, take part in services at least a few times a year, aside from the High Holidays.

Recreating the "heimishe [homelike] feeling" of a small local shul was always his goal, Rabbi Gansburg said.

"The service is traditional, but at the same time, the vast majority of the membership don't consider themselves Orthodox." Though the services are traditional, the messaging is modern and relevant, he added.

One feature he introduced during Rosh Hashanah was an electricity-free "open mic" in which participants could ask his colleague, Rabbi Simon Jacobson, questions to do with Judaism. Rabbi Jacobson, author of the bestseller, *Toward a Meaningful Life*, was a guest rabbi during the High Holidays.

"People are missing that," Rabbi Gansburg said, noting that 100 people took part in the program.

Kogan is one of the neighbourhood people attracted by the intimacy of the shul. Her son had his bar mitzvah there and he enjoyed preparatory classes with Rabbi Gansburg. She does not consider herself particularly religious, but she enjoys the traditional services.

"It's unbelievably open and accepting. They want you there because you're Jewish, that's the bottom line," she said.

Kogan had helped with other upgrades to the facility in the past, but nothing on this scale. In the midst of the project, she received text messages from friends commending her efforts.

"I've been told it's the biggest mitzvah you can do," she said.

A little rushed, but meaningful nevertheless. ■

Jewish Island Yacht Club hopeful about merger talks

PAUL LUNGEN
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The Island Yacht Club (IYC), founded in 1951 on the Toronto Islands as a haven for Jewish boaters, is in talks with unnamed parties in a bid to ensure the club's survival while retaining its historic name.

"There are more than one interested parties, and I'm confident something will evolve," said William Kassel, the IYC's commodore, the equivalent of its CEO. "If it does evolve, some arrangement will be made before Nov. 1."

Kassel would not identify the parties in question, but he said talks are focused on a potential merger with a marina and with acquiring new management that would look at boosting the club's membership.

The club's downward spiral began in the spring of 2004. A group of kids were playing with matches, lighting the fluff that came off the trees on Mugg's Island, when a gust of wind blew some of the burning cottony fibres under a building.

The old wooden clubhouse caught fire and burned to the ground, sending the storied club into a financial downturn that has yet to be reversed.

"We lost more than half the members at that time, and it's been an uphill battle to get them back," Kassel said.

After the clubhouse burned down, members had to make do with tents for three years before a permanent structure was constructed. Many left for other yacht clubs, others bought cottages and some took up golf, he said.

Membership is down to 60 voting members and another 60 social members, a far cry from the 260 voting members the club could boast in 1990, when he also served as commodore, Kassel said.

> *There are more than one interested parties, and I'm confident something will evolve.*

Last week, the *National Post*, citing unnamed sources, said the club had asked members to come up with $18,000 each to ensure the club's survival, but Kassel declined to comment on financial specifics.

The IYC was established at a time Jewish sailors found it difficult to gain entry into other boating clubs.

Two years ago, the IYC was approached by the Royal Canadian Yacht Club with a view to merging, or to create some other arrangement.

That proposal fell through, leaving the IYC's future cloudy.

Kassel is sure the club, which is winding down for the winter, will be up and running in May 2015 when the boating season resumes.

For Kassel, maintaining the viability of the IYC "is an emotional thing. My children grew up there. My grandchildren are there.

"You get personally attached because it's where you spent all your summers," he said. ■

The rebuilt clubhouse on Mugg's Island.

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OPINION

Our journey in a fragile sukkah

Lila Sarick

If a sukkah is a metaphor for the conflicting nature of our life, both fragile and surprisingly sturdy (after all, we manage to eat and sometimes sleep in it for a week, usually without incident), then nothing represents my family's journey better than our sukkah.

We started off with a wooden sukkah that would take a couple of men a few hours to put up. It was spacious and lovely and impractical.

When I became a single parent, I knew that sukkah would have to go. I gave the wooden pieces away and searched online for a sukkah that could be shipped to my front door, since we were living in a place without Jewish stores nearby.

That year, my two boys, then 10 and 13, who had never constructed more than a Lego house, put up the sukkah. It was not as lovely as our wooden one. The new one has a metal skeleton and a green plastic tarp, all secured by bungee cords, but it was, as advertised, easy to build.

We invited friends to join us for dinner that first year, and they later told me how relieved they were that my little family had a sukkah. It was a message to my kids that the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. We were flying solo, but we were not abandoning the rituals that were so filled with meaning and memory.

We moved, and that decidedly unlovely sukkah moved with us. Over the years, we became ambitious and ordered an expansion set (additional tubular beams, green tarps and bungee cords arrived in the mail) so that we could invite more friends to join us in the sukkah.

It hasn't always been smooth sailing. There's been some grumbling and sulking about putting it up, and even more when it came time to store it away after the holiday ended. There were a few times we barely got it built before the holiday, and decorations were but a hasty afterthought.

But there are golden memories too – of the boys cranking up the music and building the sukkah in happy companionship, of a raucous game of crab apple baseball played in the backyard while we decorated our temporary dwelling.

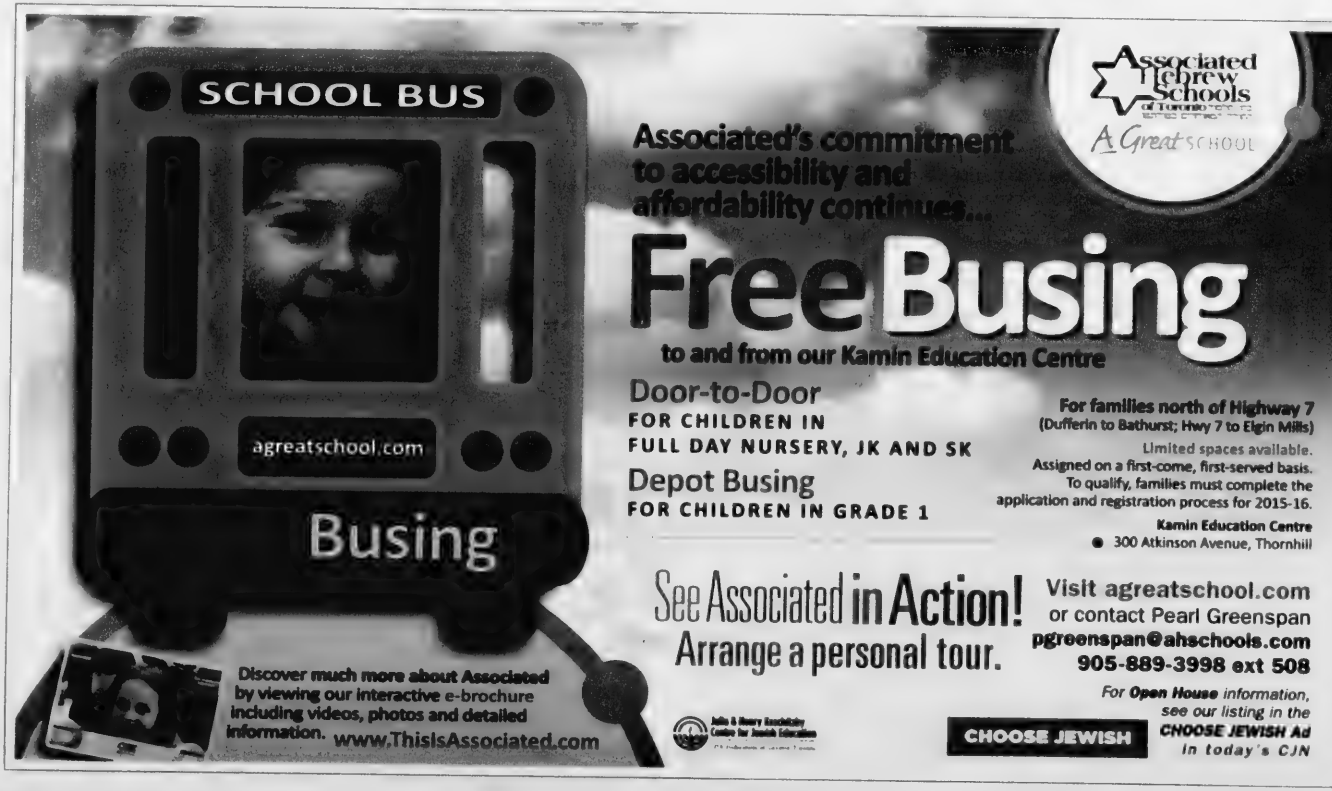
There are memories of meals savoured and songs sung in the sukkah, which glowed like a jewel box at night.

We reminisce about the wildlife that has visited our sukkah. The first time we ever saw an opossum it was snuffling around in the sukkah, gobbling up dinner crumbs. Here in Toronto, a gang of raccoons impatiently hangs around the backyard, barely concealing their annoyance as they wait for us to leave before they devour whatever we spilled in the grass.

This year, our sukkah is an all-female project. The boys who built the first edition of the sukkah are away at university, and my teenage daughter and I have started construction. Soon the two of us will be hanging the battered paper chain, the ramshackle collection of lights and the art project made at summer camp long ago. The silk-screened banners that welcome the ancient biblical guests to our sukkah – both male and female visitors are represented – will be dangling from their appointed beams.

Occasionally we talk about the grand old wooden sukkah and the wonderful parties we hosted in it. We miss it, and all that it represented, but my kids have a hard-won understanding that life sometimes changes in ways we can't predict. The important thing is that we are sitting, sometimes swatting mosquitoes and sometimes freezing, but together in our ever-so-slightly shaky dwelling. Our sukkah may be fragile, but like us, it's resilient. ■

ARTIST GALIA GOODMAN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Essay

'I signed up for co-op housing. Twelve years later, I'm still waiting'

MIRIAM WISEMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, TORONTO

I have been on my own for as long as I can remember.

I have a 37-year-old son that I raised until the age of 26. Being the sole caregiver, I was forced to proceed with the struggles of life on my own. Life for me was difficult. I was depressed, alone and many times I thought I wouldn't make it.

My problems began with health issues that prevented me from working full-time. I am diabetic and suffer from angina, leaving me out of breath after even the slightest exertion.

I did find work waitressing to try to make ends meet. Yet, despite these jobs, I was always under financial stress and plagued by worry about everyday things. How was I going to pay my rent? Could I put food on the table? Would I have to choose between the two?

In the 1980s, I qualified for subsidized housing, but that meant, in my case, moving outside the Jewish community. Eventually, I felt it was important that my son have Jewish friends and we moved closer to the Jewish community – but it came with a price.

To do this, I used credit cards to try to pay for what we needed. The bills piled up. I soon fell into credit card debt. Living in the Jewish community is expensive.

In 1985, my stress continued to rise and my health deteriorated. I had quintuple bypass surgery and a tracheotomy. I was hospitalized for three months, which included being in an induced coma for 22 days.

When I was released from hospital, I couldn't work. The phone calls from creditors started to come in. I couldn't pay back the money I owed. I couldn't take it. I hung around outside to escape the humiliation of the phone calls.

I heard that help was available in the Jewish community, but I wasn't able to find assistance. It felt like all I heard was "no."

I signed up for co-op housing. Twelve years later, I'm still waiting. With nowhere to go, and no one to turn to, I declared bankruptcy. For me this marked the end, and I lost all hope.

Somehow, I found my way to Jewish Family & Child. I arrived defeated and crying.

It is now one year later. I am living in the Jewish community with rental assistance from the Jewish community. Having help to pay my rent means I have a little bit of money left over each month. I can buy food that is actually healthy for me, so I can be proactive about making good choices and take care of my diabetes and heart condition. It means having some spare money to buy a TV, a privilege I haven't had for more than seven years. Today, a secret pleasure is sitting on my couch to watch a movie. I also now have some clothes that no longer hang on me like towels. I even have shoes that fit.

Most people would not think of these small pleasures as being lifesavers. But they are.

The biggest and most important change for me, however, is that I am also now able to make dinners for my son and his family so I can see them more. I am proud to feel like I can reciprocate after only going to their house for so long. I even have a few toys for his kids to play with and have a good time at Grandma's place. This is what I now live for. ■

Miriam Wiseman (not her real name) is a recipient of Kehilla's residential assistance program. The Kehilla Residential Programme was established in 1982 as UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's official housing agency. Its mandate is to identify and champion affordable housing initiatives responsive to the needs of the Jewish community in the Toronto area. The agency is now responsible for approximately 500 units in the community.

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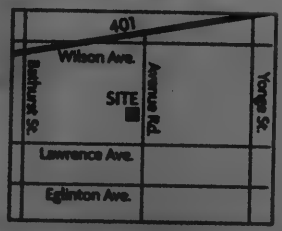

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OCTOBER 30, 2014

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Canadian named to head Keren Hayesod-UIA

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

David Koschitzky plans to rack up plenty of frequent flier miles in the next two years as he travels to the four corners of the world in his capacity as head of the world board of trustees of Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal (UIA).

Koschitzky, a Toronto businessman who also serves as chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), was named to the position earlier this summer. His mission, which he has chosen to accept, is to return Keren Hayesod-UIA to the forefront of people's thinking when they consider supporting Israel.

"There was a time when Keren Hayesod was on everybody's lips and everybody understood what it was," Koschitzky said on the line from Israel. "I want to make sure Keren Hayesod evolves and adapts to the new generation."

Founded in 1920, Keren Hayesod was the organization through which Diaspora Jewish communities, other than the United States, funnelled money raised in local campaigns to the State of Israel or the Jewish Agency. In Canada, the money

David Koschitzky

is transferred to Keren Hayesod via Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA.

Historically, funds raised sent to the Jewish Agency were used for aliyah and absorption. Over the years, Keren Hayesod helped bring tens of thousands of Jews from Europe to Israel. It established more than 900 settlements while providing newcomers with homes and jobs, while developing the economic, industrial, educational, and cultural framework of the country.

In 2013, it helped absorb 19,000 immigrants. Altogether, it allocated $122.5 million for programs and projects in Israel.

Koschitzky, who has headed UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and its annual campaign, said he hopes to increase "brand awareness" of Keren Hayesod's work. "A brand needs to be continually be marketed. It's especially important for an institution where there is a generational change," he said.

People of his father's generation had only a few options when it came to charitable giving. Today, people are inundated with requests to support multiple good causes, he said.

That poses a challenge for organizations like Keren Hayesod, but it has reacted by offering donors the opportunity to direct their gifts in addition to putting in a larger pool to be allocated by the agency, he added.

Today, Keren Hayesod-UIA provides for programs that enhance the quality of life of impoverished segments of the Israeli population, while fostering partnerships with Jewish communities worldwide.

Its Ayalim program brings student volunteers to a dozen communities in the Negev and Galilee to perform community service work, while Kesher brings together young people from around the world for leadership development.

The *shinshinim* emissary program sees young Israelis spend time in local communities' schools and shuls, further enhancing ties between the Diaspora and Israel.

Koschitzky said "it was an honour to be asked" to head Keren Hayesod-UIA. "People have looked to Canada for leadership positions," he said. "I would say I come from a family that impressed upon us to do the best and to give back to the community."

His aunt, Julia Koschitzky, held the same position with Keren Hayesod from 1992-97. She serves as an honorary director on the board of *The CJN*.

A native of Calgary, Koschitzky has also lived in Chicago and Toronto. He holds an engineering degree from the University of Toronto and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He is co-chair and CEO for North America of IKO, a global manufacturer of roofing and waterproofing materials.

He has served on the Jewish Agency board of governors and chair of the Jewish Agency's strategic planning committee. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Ashkenazi Jewish women should get cancer gene test: study

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dr. Ephrat Levy-Lahad

> *We should be testing women who are still healthy at a stage when we can prevent the disease*

In a reversal of current medical thinking, a new Israeli study says that all Jewish Ashkenazi women over 30 should be tested for the BRAC1 and BRAC2 mutations, even if they don't have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer.

"We should be testing women who are still healthy at a stage when we can prevent the disease," Dr. Ephrat Levy-Lahad, director of the Fuld Family Department of Genetics at Shaare Zedek Medical Center, said of her findings, which will be published in the *Journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Levy-Lahad presented the research at the hospital's second annual breast cancer symposium, held Sept. 10 at Shaare Zedek in Jerusalem.

The study found that Ashkenazi women who tested positive for the genetic mutations during random screenings had high rates of breast and ovarian cancer, even when they had no family history of the disease. Many of the women identified by the researchers would never have known they were carrying the mutation if not for the screening offered by the study.

The two most common breast cancer genes are BRCA1 and BRCA2. Everyone is born with them, and normally they help protect cells from cancerous changes.

It's estimated that one in 40 Ashkenazi Jewish women – about 2.3 per cent – carry a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, compared to one of every 800 members of the general population, according to the U.S. Centres for Disease Control.

Women carrying a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation also have a higher than usual risk of developing ovarian cancer. In 1997, researchers at Shaare Zedek, under the guidance of Levy-Lahad, discovered that one-third of the cases of ovarian cancer in Ashkenazi women are due to inherited mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Since that time, these genes have also been linked to the occurrence of breast cancer.

The new study was done on women of Ashkenazi origin, because in the Ashkenazi population, there are three common mutations that are easy to check at low cost.

To reach random women, 8,000 healthy Ashkenazi men were tested. Of that number, 175 were found to carry the mutation (the gene exists in men but affects almost exclusively women). The women in the families of the carrier men were tested and their family histories were documented. Half of the female carriers had no family history of breast or ovarian cancer.

According to criteria in use today, these women would not have been tested at all, and the gene would have been discovered only after the onset of cancer symptoms. This means that one in every 100 women – one per cent of the population – is not aware she's a carrier and, therefore, is at risk for breast and ovarian cancer without the ability to take preventive measures.

This significant finding led the researchers to the conclusion that each woman of this group needs to be genetically screened for mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.

Dr. Steven Narod, a world leader in the field of breast and ovarian cancer genetics at the University of Toronto's affiliated Women's College Research Institute, has been conducting ongoing testing for BRCA1 and BRCA2.

"We agree with the position that all Ashkenazi Jewish women be tested. It is better to prevent the cancer than treat it," he said.

But Dr. Robert Nuttall, assistant director of cancer control policy, Canadian Cancer Society, told *The CJN* that "while genetic screening can identify women at high risk for cancer, there are still questions that need to be addressed before genetic screening is made available to the Ashkenazi Jewish population, or even the general population, regardless of one's medical history."

He added: "We need more research about what the best strategy is after the identification of the mutation. These strategies could include counselling, a personal plan of testing, or prophylactic surgery of the breast or ovaries. There may also be psychological or emotional implications that result from an identification of a mutation."

He said he hopes the Israeli study will encourage more research on BRCA gene mutations in the Ashkenazi population.

"Until then, we encourage people, and especially people of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry, to be aware of their family history of cancer, and to talk to their doctor about whether they should go for genetic counselling and genetic testing." ■

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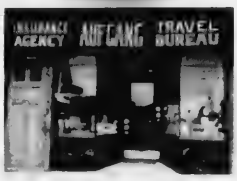

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Fringe candidate slams Ford at UJA-CIJA mayoral debate

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

There wasn't much focus on Jewish issues at the CIJA-UJA-hosted mayoral debate Sunday night, but Ari Goldkind, the race's sole Jewish candidate, arguably stole the show with his caustic barbs directed at fellow candidate Doug Ford, particularly when he confronted the councillor on his brother's past use of an anti-Semitic slur.

The debate, held at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Wilmington campus and attended by several hundred people, featured fringe candidate Goldkind debating alongside leading contenders Ford, John Tory and Olivia Chow.

It was moderated by *National Post* columnist Chris Selley, who gave each candidate several minutes to respond to questions on transit, taxes, community safety and conduct in city council.

Goldkind, a defence lawyer and the fourth-place mayoral contender, had the audience chuckling with one-liners such as "What does Ford stand for? Falsify. Overstate. Repeat. Deny" and "This campaign has turned into a reality show. It's like the Kardashian show."

He later took Ford to task for what he said was the former's failure to apologize for an anti-Semitic slur uttered by his brother, Mayor Rob Ford – who made a conspicuous appearance partway through the debate – last March.

"Mayor Rob Ford called Jews the 'K' word," Goldkind said. "And then he has the chutzpah to come in here tonight. He might get a free pass from the others on this stage, but not me. When you insult a whole people, you are not setting an example for the city."

As the audience laughed and booed, Doug Ford responded, "I have a Jewish doctor and a Jewish dentist… my family has the utmost respect for the Jewish community… We look forward to working with the Jewish community, as we have for the last four years."

He then added that he had already apologized on behalf of his brother for the remark, adding, "I've told [Rob] clearly that those comments were unacceptable."

On the subject of funding proposed transit projects, Goldkind stated, "I'm the only one on stage who's open in saying we have to talk about taxes. If you believe Tory's Smart Track plan is going to be free, or Ford's 'subways, subways subways' will be, or that Chow's proposed tax increase [to fund transit] will only be on the wealthy, if you accept that math, they'll earn your vote," he said sarcastically.

He added: "I will ask each household in the city to pay 50 cents extra per day… then… instead of going to the provincial and federal governments with our hands empty, go to them and say, 'the people of Toronto have spoken and we have a transit plan worth investing in.'"

> *Mayor Rob Ford called Jews the 'K' word... when you insult a whole people, you are not setting an example for the city*

Invectives aside, the four took turns laying out their respective visions for transit, with poll-leader Tory emphasizing Smart Track, his London, England-modelled surface rail subway plan. Meanwhile, Chow endorsed her plan to build light rail transit (LRT) and a downtown subway relief line, Ford called for subway expansion and Goldkind advocated for a downtown relief line, new LRT lines and replacement of the Scarborough subway line with LRT.

Regarding taxation, Ford and Tory both pledged to privatize garbage collection in the city's east end.

Ford trumpeted his brother's administration's slashing of the vehicle registration tax.

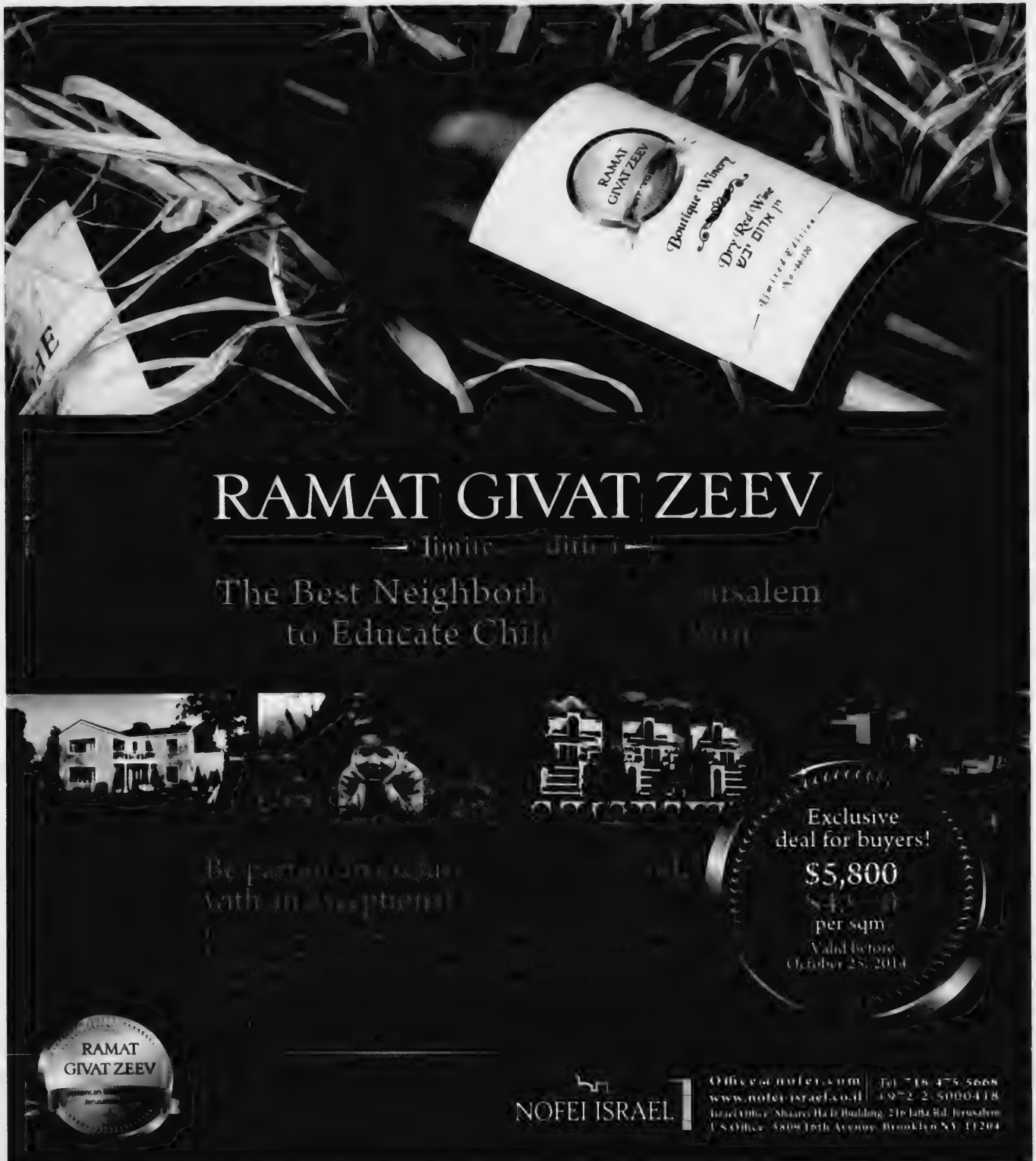
Chow said she would increase the land transfer tax for houses valued at more than $2 million and raise property taxes around the rate of inflation, and Goldkind suggested congestion fees and road tolls on certain highways to help pay for infrastructure improvements, as well as raising the land transfer tax on homes valued at over $1.1 million.

The candidates also addressed community safety and the recent spike in anti-Semitic incidents in Toronto.

Chow said the Toronto police hate crimes unit could use more support and training to be able to better work with people, including those with mental health issues. She suggested that her plan to beef up after-school activities across the city could be a good antidote against "young people who get into trouble and get recruited by people who are full of hate."

Tory brought up the need for better education for "the young and less young," including more training for police and interfaith initiatives in the community.

Ford said that under his brother's administration, the city hired more police officers and re-allocated a number of officers to the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS). He said the city needs more mentors for young people. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Progressive Zionists fight for spot in WZC delegation

JODIE SHUPAC
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The Canadian delegation to the World Zionist Congress (WZC), to be held in Jerusalem in October 2015, should include a strong progressive Zionist voice, maintains Ameinu Canada, an organization formed several years ago that describes itself as a multi-generational community of progressive Jews in Canada.

An offshoot of the U.S.-based group Ameinu, established about a decade ago by alumni of the labour Zionist youth movement Habonim Dror, Ameinu Canada launched an online petition last month to qualify as a member of the Canadian Zionist Federation (CZF). According to the World Zionist Organization, which consists of Zionist groups from around the world, a Jewish Zionist organization becomes eligible to join a local Zionist federation when it has at least 300 signatures from Jews over the age of 18.

Ameinu Canada gathered 320 signatures to submit in time for the CZF's Sept. 30 deadline.

CZF members get to determine who comprises the Canadian delegation to the WZC, either through an election or, if the members can reach an agreement, by deciding internally which groups comprise what percentage of the total 19 seats the WZO allocates to Canada, said Norman Stern, national president of the CZF.

Other CZF members include the Zionist bodies representing the three main streams of Judaism: Mizrachi, from the Orthodox movement, MERCAZ, representing Conservative, and ARZA of Reform.

"We believe the delegation should reflect all segments of the Canadian Jewish community, including those who identify with progressive Zionism and are supportive of [its] Zionist youth movements," said Trilby Smith, one of Ameinu Canada's founders, who lives in Vancouver.

Smith explained that, although, at the last Congress, held in 2011, ARZA "was kind enough to give Ameinu, on a one-time basis, a delegate out of its allocation," Ameinu Canada would really like, this time around, to "take the organizational steps necessary to qualify on our own."

In 2011, Ameinu Canada sent Issie Lyon, co-chair of Canadian Friends of Peace Now (CFPN), whose membership overlaps with Ameinu Canada's, to the WZC on its behalf.

Since the end of World War II, the WZC, initiated in 1897, has met every four or so

Issie Lyon

years in Jerusalem. It decides the policies of the WZO, which caps the total number of delegates at 500.The agenda typically consists of resolutions related to Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora and allocating relevant funds and appointments to Zionist organizations and activities worldwide.

Because decisions made by the congress inform how much money the World Zionist Organization spends on Jewish summer camps, Zionist youth movements and subsidies for Israel programs, Ameinu Canada is eager to send a representative who will advocate for expanded support for progressive Zionist youth activities.

"We have a particular focus on developing the next generation of engaged Jews," the petition read. "To do so, we operate the Kibbutz Program Center [in Israel] and provide support for our youth movement Habonim Dror and their [affiliate] summer camps [Camp Miriam in British Columbia and Camp Gesher in Ontario]."

The WZC has previously dealt with issues related to West Bank settlements, and Ameinu, which backs a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, hopes to "influence WZC policy on religious pluralism, democracy in Israel and the pursuit of peace with the Palestinians," Smith said.

Lyon, on behalf of CFPN, has been helping to publicize the petition to other liberal Zionist groups in Canada.

"It's important to show both Israel and global Jewry that there is a significant portion of the Jewish community in Canada that has a progressive Zionist perspective on what's best for Israel in the long run," he said. "It was really heartwarming to meet Zionists from around the world who want Israel to prosper in peace and security and are very concerned about some of the specific policies the Israeli government is pursuing, like building settlements [in the West Bank]." ■

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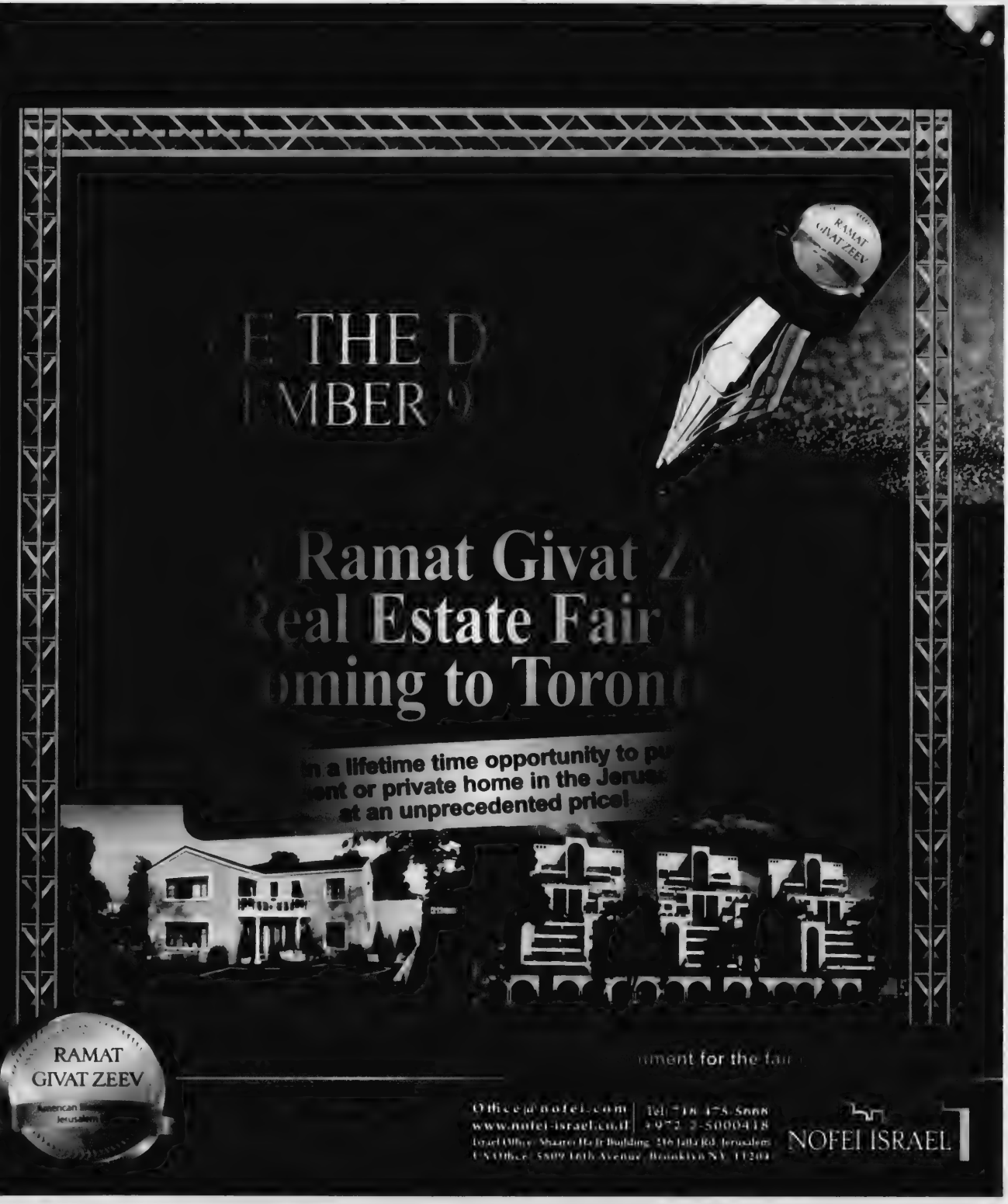
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Rock N' Stroll raises over $220,000 for high-risk births

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Gina Rim was a high-risk mother. She's diabetic, and toward the end of her pregnancy, she experienced a complication called pre-eclampsia, which is characterized by high blood pressure.

Her daughter Rosie, now a chubby eight-month-old, was considered a high-risk baby, born nearly six weeks early.

"We were in the intensive care unit [at Mount Sinai Hospital] for two or three weeks," Rim said. "Mount Sinai was really good to us. They watched over us from beginning to end, and even after we had the baby, they made sure I had all the specialists I needed."

Rim, her partner Scott and baby Rosie were among the 1,200 participants who converged on Earl Bales Park Sept. 28 for Mount Sinai Hospital's inaugural fundraising walk to support high-risk births, called Rock N' Stroll: A Big Walk for Tiny Patients.

Participants flooded the park, baby strollers in tow, to do the three-kilometre walk around Earl Bales before meeting for kid-friendly musical performances, games and a barbecue.

Gina Rim, a high-risk mother, with partner Scott and baby Rosie JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

The event, which raised more than $220,000 – surpassing its fundraising goal of $175,000 – was designed to engage families who had been assisted by Mount Sinai's perinatal centre and to encourage them to raise funds to support the resources, facilities and equipment that Mount Sinai uses to deliver its specialized high-risk obstetric care.

In addition to the $25 registration fee per family (or $10 per individual), participants were urged to raise an additional $100 to support the hospital, whose perinatal centre is one of the largest in North America.

"Women's and infants' health has always been a critical part of the exemplary care provided by Mount Sinai," said Kevin Goldthorp, president of the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation. "Every year, almost 7,000 babies are born at our hospital, with two-thirds of those pregnancies considered high risk. Through such events as Rock N' Stroll, we can continue to provide a tremendous level of support to our flagship program, and provide the best patient care possible."

The marketing campaign for Rock N' Stroll drew the attention of a number of actual, high-profile rockers, who helped to promote the cause by lending their signature images to it: the babies modeling in the event posters are dressed up like musicians KISS and Elton John.

Amish Jain, a physician who works in the ICU at Mount Sinai, was at the walk with his two young children.

He said high-risk births – which typically involve cases where the mother has a pre-existing medical condition, is older, is pregnant with multiple babies or goes into premature labour – are actually on the rise in Canada.

"Many of these babies are surviving, though they would not have survived in the past," Jain said. "It's an expanding need within the health care system, to support these small babies. And they go through a lot, in terms of the help they need and what parents go through."

He noted that the rising use of reproductive technology as an aid to conception can affect a woman's pregnancy.

"When [reproductive technology is used], the number of multiples [meaning twins, triplets, etc.] goes up… this can create complications… and many of the women who do this are older and might have underlying problems, so the babies might be delivered prematurely."

"We look after a very high-risk population," he said. ■

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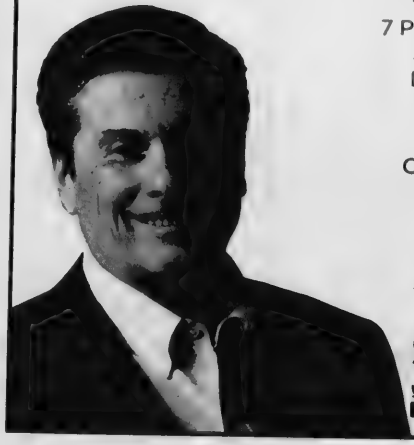

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Ostrovtzer Society to celebrate 90th anniversary

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A celebratory luncheon will be held Oct. 26 at Beth Torah Congregation to mark the 90th Anniversary of the Ostrovtzer Independent Mutual Benefit Society.

"We are looking to reconnect with those who may have been affiliated with the society at one time, and we are very interested in inviting the children and grandchildren of members and former members who may have passed away to join us and learn more about who we are," said Suri Weinberg-Linsky, director of the Ostrovtzer Society.

The society was established in 1924 and named after the city of Ostrowiec, Poland, with membership climbing to 38 in its first year. By 1934, membership had grown to 100 people.

The focus was to provide friendship and assistance to its *landsmen* who had left Ostrowiec and come to Toronto to start a new life.

Landsmen consisted of Jewish immigrants who came from the same village, town, country, or region in eastern Europe. They called themselves *landsmen*, which derives from the German word *landsmannschaft*, meaning an organization of people from the same area with whom one feels a special closeness while living in a foreign city.

The Ostrovtzer Young Men's Branch was organized in 1947 with 10 members, and in 1980, it amalgamated with the society for the benefit of both groups.

Queenie Berman, 88, has been a member of the society since she married her late husband, Shlomo (Sam) Berman, in 1972.

"The society was formed to make certain that people who were coming from overseas – including many survivors from the Holocaust – would feel welcome in a new country," said Berman, the society's financial secretary.

The society provided many benefits to its members, including free loans, medical coverage, sick benefits, burial plots and spousal benefits. Members met frequently for breakfasts, picnics, banquets and events in aid of philanthropic endeavours.

"When we started to get a little bit of money, our main goal was to see that most Jewish charities were receiving help from us," said Berman.

"This was the spirit that defined the society in its early days and throughout its history," said current president Albert Speisman.

"We give to United Jewish Appeal, Jewish National Fund, Baycrest Foundation, Ve'ahavta and Israel," Berman said.

Today, the society has more than 200 members and oversees sections of three cemeteries, on Royal York Road and at Bathurst Lawn and Pardes Shalom.

The Kelly Waldman Scholarship was established in 1968 by the Ostrovtzer Young Men's Branch to honour the memory of the first president.

The original award of $100 was made to a member's child entering university or college. When the branch merged with the society in 1980, the award was opened to the grandchildren of members as well. In 1995, the award was increased to $200, and since 2002, consolation awards have been made to deserving applicants.

"From its inception, awards totalling $8,100 have been presented to 51 scholarship winners and 20 consolation winners," Speisman said.

To ensure the society's activities and legacy will live on, it has established an endowment fund with the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto.

"It's important to remember our roots and where we come from. Once the elders are gone, a lot of our history will be lost and it's important to keep it alive," said Weinberg-Linksy, a member for 20 years and the daughter of late member Jack Weinberg.

"I would like to see the society remain as it is, because it has a good name, it was always a good society in the community, and I'm hoping that members who are not that old will eventually take over," Berman said. ■

Luncheon tickets are $25 for members and $35 for non-members. Call 416-783-6989, or email hhundert12@gmail.com.

UJA Federation Announces Nominees

Toronto – Elizabeth Wolfe, Nominating Committee Chair for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, has announced the nominees for the Board of Directors and Individual Representatives Council Members.

Elections will be held during UJA Federation's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 26, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services (4600 Bathurst Street, Toronto).

In accordance with the by-laws, the Federation's governance consists of a Council and a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, the Chair and the Senior Vice-Chair will be elected by the Council Members. No nominations can be made from the floor during the Annual Meeting. However, any member of the Jewish community may be placed in nomination by complying with the following by-laws:

In order to be elected or appointed and to continue as a Council Member, each individual must (a) be Jewish, reside in the Greater Toronto Area, and support the objects of the Corporation (b) have made a financial commitment to the United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto in respect of the most recent annual campaign and be in good standing with the United Jewish Appeal in respect of such commitment; and (c) shall not have refused to remove any barrier that is within his or her control that would prevent his or her spouse's religious re-marriage.

Each Individual Representative Council Member shall be elected at an Election Meeting by Community Individuals immediately preceding the Annual Meeting from among the qualified candidates duly nominated by the Nominating committee or nominated by any seven Community Individuals; provided that in respect of nominations made by Community Individuals: (a) No Community Individuals may nominate more than three nominees for election as Individual Council Member at any Election Meeting; (b) such nominations shall be in writing and accompanied by the written consent of the nominee; and (c) such nominations shall be delivered to the Corporation at least 21 days before the Election Meeting which the election is to occur.

Nominated for Chair of the Board is Morris Perlis and Senior Vice-Chair of the Board is Bruce Leboff. Nominees for the Board of Directors include:

For a two year term:
Allan Brown, Michael Buckstein, Laurie Davis, Michael Diamond, Lisa Draper, David Dulberg, Paula Foster, Debbie Kimel, Sarena Koschitzky, Wendy Posluns, Joel Reitman, Daniel Rethazy, Ariella Rohringer, Jason Rubinoff, Richard Venn, Fred Waks

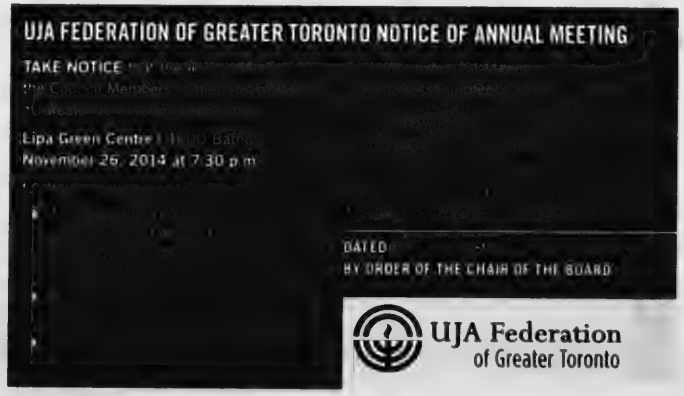
For a one year term:
Andrea Cohen, Alison Himel, David Matlow, Ralph Shedletsky

Continuing their two year term:
Leslie Gales, Shel Geller, Leo Goldhar, Lorne Goldstein, Yael Karol, Jodie Kaufman Davis, Warren Kimel, Keith Ray

The following are to be elected for a two year term 2014-2016 as Individual Representative Council Members:

Cheryl Appleby-Jackson, Tobie Bekhor, Donald Bennett, Allan Brown, David Brown, Sandra Brown, Robert Cherniak, Jack Chisvin, Andrea Cohen, Jeffrey Cohen, Lisa Dack, Roz Davidson, Laurie Davis, Michael Diamond, David Dulberg, Anita Ekstein, Tina Erlich, Paula Foster, Abe Glowinsky, Jill Goldberg-Reitman, Jeffrey Goldfarb, Lorne Goldstein, Harry Gorman, Sara Gottlieb, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Halbert, Susan Harris, Adam Joseph, Jodie Kaufman Davis, Debbie Kimel, Henry Koschitzky, Ruth Ladovsky, Judy Libman, Howard Lichtman, Agi Mandel, David Matlow, Pamela Medjuck, Ran Mesterman, Paul Morton, Gil Palter, Elliott Peranson, Morris Perlis, Wendy Posluns, Joel Reitman, Daniel Rethazy, Gerald Richler, Rammy Rochman, Gerald Ross, Sheila Rother, Jason Rubinoff, Alan Sandler, Galina Sandler, Brian Schachter, Laurie Sheff, Marilyn Sinclair, Leanne Spier, Arthur Stern, Cyrel Troster, and Fred Waks

In addition to the Individual Council Members listed, each Community Group of the Federation shall be entitled to appoint (2) Individuals as Group Council Members. Any Community Group which has a membership in good standing in excess of 100 persons residing in the Greater Toronto Area shall be entitled to appoint one additional Group Council Member. According to the by-laws of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, organizations and associations may apply to become a Community Group by submitting an application that confirms that it subscribes to the objects of the UJA Federation, and promotes the United Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign. Applications for Community Group Membership were solicited via mail in August 2014. All Community Groups must be registered with UJA Federation by October 13, 2014.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Lice ladies remove stigma of annoying pests

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Maggie Mincer "fell into" the business after her daughter kept getting lice often.

The thought of head lice can frighten, embarrass and alarm many parents and children.

But Maggie Mincer and Shelley Cliche, established lice specialists who work in the Jewish community, have made great strides with kids and their parents in reducing the stigma associated with the annoying pests.

Lice are insects that live and breed on a person's head, feeding themselves by biting the scalp. Having head lice (pediculosis) is not uncommon. According to Toronto Public Health, between six and 12 million people worldwide get head lice each year. The most recent Canadian statistics indicate one out of every 14 households with children ages three to 12 have had at least one head lice infestation during the past 12 months.

Turning to an expert is the best thing you can do when trying to deal with head lice.

Mincer began her Toronto business as the "Lice Lady" more than 12 years ago. "I kind of fell into the lice business because my daughter, Adina, was getting lice often. I have become known in the community as the Lice Lady, and everything since has blossomed," Mincer said with pride.

Local Hebrew day schools are among her clients.

"Since we have started doing regular lice checks at school, it has become a lot less prevalent. Maggie comes two to three times a year to check the kids. Those diagnosed with lice will be sent home and only allowed back to school with a note from a lice specialist," said Jackie Snow, administrative assistant at Associated Hebrew Day Schools' Posluns branch on Neptune Drive.

Head lice can be found year-round, with head-to-head contact with an already infested person being the most common way to get them. School, playground, slumber parties, camp, and travelling are the most likely places for such contact. The hallmark symptom of head lice is a severely itchy head.

The insects are tiny, wingless, move quickly and are difficult to see. They cannot jump or fly.

The U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention describe the life cycle of the head louse in three stages: eggs, nymph, and adult.

Nits are head lice eggs. They are hard to see and often confused with dandruff. Nits are laid by the adult female and are cemented at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. Nits take about one week to hatch.

The egg hatches to release a nymph. The nit shell then becomes a more visible dull yellow and remains attached to the hair shaft. The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has six legs (each with claws), and is tan to greyish-white.

Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head. An infested head will have about 25 live lice. Often when there is no more room on the scalp, lice will move to the nape of the neck and behind the ears, with the bites resembling a rash.

Shelley Cliche, based in York Region, is known as Nurse Shelley and conducts school-wide lice checks at Netivot HaTorah Day School, Eitz Chaim Schools and Leo Baeck Day School two or three times a year.

"My business is the busiest after long holiday weekends, winter break, Passover, and after summer camp, due to all the visiting, bed-sharing and travelling," Cliche said.

Whether offering counselling over the phone or welcoming community members into her own home for a free demonstration, Mincer is passionate about educating kids about these nuisance pests. She offers one-on-one instruction to kids six years and older on how to comb out their own hair in the shower, an essential part of treatment and prevention.

Remedies can include over-the-counter head lice shampoo that may contain pesticides, or a more natural approach used throughout the growing number of lice salons popping up across the GTA.

Mincer's natural approach to treatment consists of coating vegetable oil onto the scalp and then combing out the hair, strand by strand, with a special lice comb that has long teeth.

"The process takes about one hour, and when I leave the home the child is lice- and nit-free. I also check all family members and will return for a follow-up visit one week later," she said.

"In between, the parent or the child must comb out their hair with a special lice comb in the shower," Mincer said.

"The biggest mistake parents make is they stop too soon," said Cliche.

Getting lice is mostly an elementary-school phenomenon: there is a marked decline once kids hit middle school.

"When kids go to middle school and high school, they start using hair products, like mousse, gel and hair spray. Lice don't like hair products," Mincer said. ■

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CHARTWELL CONSTANTIA retirement residence

October 14
Corey Keeble • Curator at the Royal Ontario Museum in the Department of World Cultures. Back by popular demand, Corey will be talking about the architecture and wonder of
Canadian Synagogues

October 21
Ellie Tesher • Advice columnist, author, public speaker and former TV host whose column Ellie has appeared in newspapers in North America since September 2002. Ellie will challenge and enlighten us about
Sex and Sexuality

Extendicare Retirement Residences

October 28
Dr. Ken Shulman • Chief, Brain Sciences Program, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Dr. Shulman has been involved in the development of medico-legal guidelines for the assessment of testamentary capacity; for example, executing a legal will and vulnerability to undue influence.
Will Challenges and Testamentary Capacity: A Medical Perspective

CHARTWELL LANSING retirement residence

November 4
Kathy Kacer • During Holocaust Education week, award winning author and playwright, Kathy will talk about her latest novel Shanghai Escape; share insights into the play Therefore Choose Life (on stage Spring 2015) and let us in on details about her newest book (out in Fall 2014) - a true story called The Magician of Auschwitz
What I've Heard and What I've Learned: The Power of Holocaust Stories

FOUR ELMS RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

November 11
Martin Goldfarb • Chairman of Goldfarb Corp., Martin's storied career includes official pollster, advisor and strategist to P.M. Pierre Trudeau. Co-author of two books including an examination of the political electoral process in Canada, Martin will discuss and dissect the results of the October Toronto election.
To be or Not To Be - Mayor

HAZELTON PLACE RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

November 18
Mike Fegelman • Executive Director of Honest Reporting Canada An organization dedicated to promoting fair and accurate coverage of Israel in Canadian media. He will talk about countering media bias against Israel. What is it, how can I identify it, and what can I do about it.
How to Identify and Counter Unfair Media Coverage of Israel

Living Life

November 25
Marilyn Herbert • Founder of "Book-in-a-Box" club Marilyn will review Dara Horn's "A Guide to the Perplexed". The original is a major theological work written by the Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, in the 12th C. In her novel Horn covers sibling relationships, social media, the Arab Spring, divine providence, asthma, arrogance, divine providence etc.
A Guide to The Perplexed

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Lev Tahor: where's the proof?

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

I had a very interesting exchange with a clerk in the courthouse in St. Jerome, Que., last month about court documents pertaining to the Lev Tahor case.

I wanted to get a copy of the materials, and the clerk asked me for the name of the person who had been charged.

"It's about Lev Tahor," I replied.

"What's the name of the individual charged?" she asked.

"I don't know. It's about a group called Lev Tahor."

"I need the name of the person charged," she answered.

She was 100 per cent correct. In Canadian law, individuals are responsible for their actions. There is, supposedly, no guilt by association. But if you've been reading media coverage of the Lev Tahor saga, it would seem that everybody in the group abuses children.

A wide range of allegations has been levelled against Lev Tahor. The group, which consists of about 225 ultra-Orthodox Jews who dress in the garb of the 18th century, has been the subject of allegations, which if true, are damning. They've been called a cult and accused of child abuse, forced underage marriage, neglect, forcible confinement, assault, poor personal hygiene, failing to educate their children.

For their part, Lev Tahor spokesmen say they're the subjects of a smear campaign. Everyone is part of the group of their own free will, they say. They love their children, don't abuse or neglect them, and have addressed issues of cleanliness that are brought to their attention. (The Montreal doctor brought in to look at instances of fungus on girls' feet said she often sees that sort of thing in her practice.)

Lev Tahor representatives say they're unpopular because they're anti-Zionist and wouldn't educate their children according to Quebec standards. If someone in the community abused their children, charge them, they say, but don't tar the entire group.

Lev Tahor gained notoriety in November 2013 when they left Quebec in advance of a date with child welfare authorities. A Quebec court subsequently ordered the apprehension of 14 kids from several families.

Settling in Chatham, Ont., members were subjects to repeated child welfare and police investigations, as well as a series of court hearings that, at first, ordered the enforcement of the Quebec apprehension order. An Ontario judge later reversed that decision. In the end, the group relocated to Guatemala.

More documents were released to the media recently containing numerous allegations that, if true, certainly paint a picture of malevolent or uncaring families whose practices would shock most Canadians.

Lev Tahor children in school. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

I visited the Lev Tahor community last January and spent three to four hours there. It's admittedly a short time, but I didn't see anything approaching what the authorities have alleged against them. Of course, I don't know what went on behind closed doors. It's possible there was abuse. But I also don't know what goes on behind closed doors on my street in Toronto. If there was abuse in Lev Tahor households, that should warrant legal action.

But despite months of almost daily visits from child welfare authorities and police, there were no criminal charges in Ontario, let alone convictions. And despite 100 visits in Quebec from child welfare workers, the apprehension orders were overturned.

The Quebec case turned on education, said Lev Tahor's lawyer, Guidy Mamann, specifically authorities' concern that families weren't sending their children to approved schools or teaching the Quebec curriculum, which includes lessons on evolution and sex education. These subjects violate the group's religious sensibilities.

One person who figures prominently in court documents is David Brudzewski, a former Lev Tahor member who left in 2012. Authorities appear to have relied heavily on his information. But Lev Tahor representatives told stories about him that would certainly put his credibility into question. If *The CJN* learned of this, you'd think the authorities would have, too.

To date, all we have are allegations.

Lev Tahor members lived in Quebec for 12 years before they moved to Ontario. Brudzewski left the group two years ago. Authorities have had ample opportunity to investigate the group and have turned up nothing to warrant criminal charges or anything that has stood up in court.

Two teenage girls from Lev Tahor recently managed to flee foster care in Toronto and make their way across the U.S. border at Niagara Falls. They appeared in a U.S. court and were released to their father's custody, leaving Canadian child welfare authorities with a perfect .000 batting average in terms of successful court cases.

If the case against Lev Tahor is so strong, why can't child welfare authorities make a single case stick? ■

Anti-Semitism rally in Halifax

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

More than 100 men, women and children stood strong for Israel and marched against anti-Semitism in Halifax last Wednesday evening (Oct. 1).

Holding signs reading "We Will Not Be Silent" and proudly waving Israeli flags, the orderly and mostly silent crowd gathered in a downtown park and marched through downtown streets in a candlelight walk that culminated in a speech by the past chair of the 2013 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Mario Silva flew to Halifax from Toronto to address the community of marchers from many faiths, including more than a dozen Christians from the Annapolis Valley who travelled more than 130 kilometres to attend.

Silva, a Liberal MP for eight years, representing Davenport in Toronto, and a published author on various human rights issues, said, "We are dealing with a widespread, serious and ongoing problem. Anti-Semitism is unique in its universality, intensity, longevity and irrationality."

He stressed that world peace is in danger.

"The world cannot combat terrorism without confronting those nations that support terrorism. We cannot fight ISIS and their genocidal plot to kill all Jews, Christians and other minorities in the Middle East without facing their partners – Boko Haram, Al-Shahab, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda and Hamas – all of whom share a common fanatical ideology of destruction and death."

In an interview, Silva condemned the United Nations for its bias against Israel, suggesting more countries must speak up for Israel, which he called "an easy target for countries with their own internal problems. The Middle East, with no democracy, no respect for its own population, has its scapegoat," and the UN goes along with that.

"A lot can be learned from Israel, which just wants to live in peace," he said.

Bob Watson, a Christian from Kentville, N.S., 100 kilometres from Halifax, has been to Israel several times and has led educational and spiritual tours. He said he was proud to be at the rally. "I am in total admiration of the Jewish People… and what they have done in their land, how they've excelled in so many ways – science, education, agriculture – and how much they have contributed to the world."

The event was co-ordinated by the Atlantic Jewish Council and the Centre For Israel and Jewish Affairs to fight negative portrayals of Israel in coverage of the Gaza war.

"The purpose is to stand up for ourselves as Jewish people and to stand up for western values that this country stands for," AJC executive director Jon Goldberg said. ■

Adar and Tanya Svidler of Lower Sackville, N.S., show their support. JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

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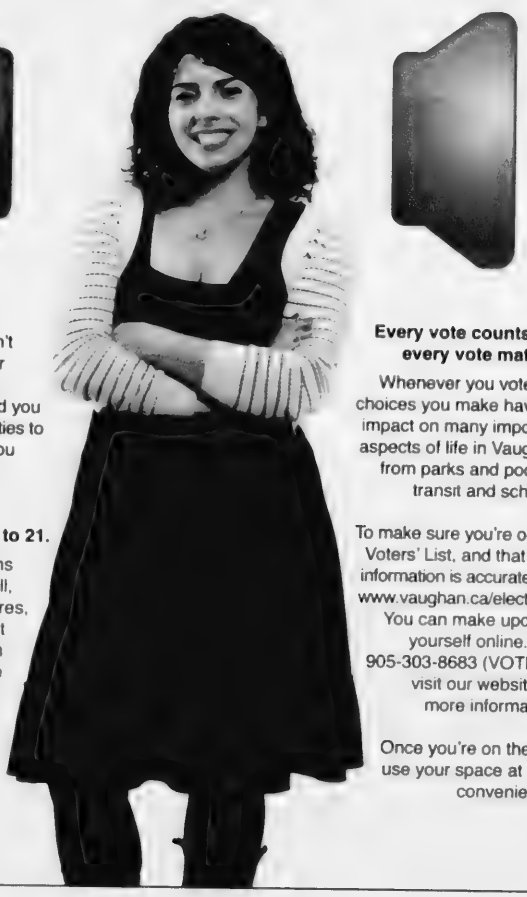

Voting Day is Monday, October 27, but you don't have to wait to cast your ballot. Advance Voting starts on October 11 and you have plenty of opportunities to vote when and where you want to.

Advance Voting runs October 11, 12 and 14 to 21.

Advance Voting locations will be set up at City Hall, in local community centres, in shopping malls and at York University. You can choose the time and the place as well as the candidates of your choice. Advance voting can save time and help avoid line-ups on Voting Day.

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THIS IS YOUR SPACE

'One giant leap' for Canada-Israel space collaboration

Israeli science minister visits Toronto for signing ceremony

PAUL LUNGEN
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Israel has launched more than 14 satellites into orbit and is one of only a handful of countries that designs and manufactures top end electrical-optical devices for use in orbit. But there's always room to do more.

Last week, Yaakov Peri, Israel's minister of science, technology and space, was in Toronto to witness the signing by Canadian and Israeli officials of an addendum to a 2005 memorandum of understanding (MOU) designed to enhance co-operation between the two countries on matters related to space.

Peri also attended the 65th International Astronautical Congress, where he met with senior officials to head off any suggestion that next year's conference, scheduled for Jerusalem, should be moved because of security concerns.

Peri was pleased with the outcome of his meetings. The Israeli Embassy was ecstatic. It tweeted a photo of the MOU signing ceremony, with the caption, "1 small step for man, 1 giant leap for Canada-Israel ties." Canadian Industry Minister James Moore re-tweeted the photo.

"We hope to co-operate on joint ventures and products which Israel and Canada will build together in the space industry," Peri told *The CJN* during his visit to Toronto last week.

Peri, who led the Shin Bet internal security agency from 1988 to 1994, said the two governments could facilitate private sector co-operation. There is lots of room for mutually beneficial ventures, he said, suggesting Israel could supply know-how in cameras and optics and Canada might provide specialized knowledge in tracking and identifying ships from space.

Menachem Kidron, director of the Israel Space Agency, and retired general Walter Natynczyk, president of the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), signed the MOU addendum. Peri, along with Moore, witnessed the signing.

Israel has also concluded collaboration agreements with Germany, China, Japan, France, United Kingdom, Russia and the United States.

"Collaboration in innovation, science and technology has played a key role in Canada's overall relations with Israel," the CSA said in a statement.

"Canada recognizes the world class innovation and commercialization capacities of Israel and continues to support active collaboration. Israel has a world-renowned and respected space program and a very diversified space industry. There are clear synergies for Canadian and Israeli companies to work together.

"The addendum... seeks to renew and strengthen co-operation at both the agency and industry level and to further Canada and Israel collaboration in space.

"This further underscores the commitment under the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership Memorandum of Understanding that was signed on the margins of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's inaugural visit to Israel earlier this year," the CSA stated.

Yaakov Peri

Attending the International Astronautical Congress, Peri met with officials from various space agencies, including representatives from South Korea, Japan, Italy, France and the European Space Agency.

Two years ago, Jerusalem was chosen as the site of the 2015 Astronautical Congress, but "in the last six months, we heard rumours of... concerns over the security situation," Peri said.

"I appeared before the bureaus of the conference and told them... Israel will do its utmost efforts to make a secure and wonderful conference. My impression is that we succeeded," he added.

Some 3,000 people from around the world – among them astronauts, representatives of international space agencies and executives with industries related to space – attend IAC conferences.

For its part, the government of Israel has committed significant resources to ensure it reaches the top five countries in space exploration and research. In 2012, the budget of the Ministry of Science and Technology was increased to around $50 million (US) in a bid to advance Israel's civil space program.

Israel launched its first satellite, the Ofeq-1, on Sept. 19, 1988. The reconnaissance satellite was developed and built in Israel and was sent into orbit using the Shavit launcher, making Israel only the eighth country at the time to develop space launch capabilities, along with the ability to build and operate satellites and spacecraft.

Israel's space program began with military purposes in mind, "but soon enough we understood civilian usage would bring tons of benefits," Peri said. ■

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Community cautious about Quebec health reform

JANICE ARNOLD
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The administration of public health and social service establishments with deep roots in Montreal's Jewish community will be dramatically changed under legislation tabled in the National Assembly Sept. 25.

Bill 10, presented by Health and Social Services Minister Gaétan Barrette, aims to save $220 million annually by reducing bureaucracy throughout the province. Barrette said the reorganization will not only save money, but also result in greater access to and more efficient delivery of services.

The bill appears to be "a massive re-engineering" of the health and social services system, Eric Maldoff, Quebec chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said Oct. 2, and is "likely to have significant effects on the community as a whole."

Montreal's Jewish General Hospital (JGH), Miriam Home and Services, Mount Sinai Hospital (MSH), Maimonides Geriatric Centre and the Jewish Eldercare Centre will be run, along with five other institutions, by the new Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux du Centre de l'Île-de-Montréal (CISSS), while the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital will be grouped with institutions under a CISSS in Laval.

There will be 18 such regional umbrella organizations in Quebec, including five on the Island of Montreal, that will administer hospitals, long-term care institutions, local health and social services centres, rehabilitation centres, youth protection agencies and other public facilities in a given territory.

The most notable change will be the elimination of the current regional bodies, the Agences de la santé et services sociaux, which act as intermediaries between the institutions and the ministry.

But individual institutions' in-house administrations are also to be scrapped, with some exceptions.

Maldoff said the Jewish community is concerned about the impact of grouping several institutions together under one administration and of more direct government control over them, both in terms of the community's sense of engagement with those institutions and in the delivery of services.

"We [with Federation CJA] are looking carefully at the impact Bill 10 would have on access to culturally and linguistically sensitive services in an environment which is welcoming and comforting to the community.

"We are also consulting on the impact this proposed reform will have on the continued support from the community, which has been vital to our institutions and has allowed them to flourish and

Quebec Health Minister Gaétan Barrette

serve all Quebecers."

The number of separate institutions in the province will be reduced from 182 to 28, without closing any points of service, Barrette said.

The discrepancy between the 28 and the 18 regional umbrellas groups, Barrette explained, is due to the fact that some centres won't come under umbrella groups. The big university hospitals – the McGill University Health Centre, the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montreal and Centre hospitalier Ste. Justine – along with the Montreal Heart Institute and other institutions in remote locations on the North Shore and the far north will be allowed to maintain administrative autonomy.

The CISSS will report directly to the ministry.

The JGH issued a terse statement about the bill on Sept. 29.

"The JGH welcomes the opportunity to join the new CISSS Centre de l'Île with its new partners from the West End of Montreal. These health-care institutions provide complementary services with the common goal to provide exemplary care for all patients," said executive director Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg.

They are St. Mary's Hospital, CSSS Cavendish, CSSS de la Montagne (not to be confused with the proposed CISSS), the Gingras-Lindsay Rehabilitation Centre and the Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre.

"This unprecedented announcement will bring profound changes to the way health-care delivery is managed in Quebec," said Rosenberg. "I believe the proposed restructuring will help improve the continuum of care to all who set foot into any medical facility in the province."

JGH president Allen Rubin further commented: "Generations of Montrealers have come to count on this fine institution, and can continue to do so.

"The JGH has a long and auspicious history in Montreal, and the uniqueness that makes this institution so special will remain intact."

The JGH, which has 637 beds, is marking its 80th anniversary this year.

The JGH said it's not giving interviews on this subject at this time.

Barrette said the composition of the CISSS boards will reflect the area's cultural, historical or local character, and he specifically mentioned that the Jewish community should be adequately represented. He also said those institutions so designated will not lose their bilingual status.

Moreover, Bill 10 will not eliminate institutions' foundations or research centres.

While Mount Sinai has not made any public comment so far, Maldoff, who is also the president of its foundation, touched on the issue at the institution's annual public information meeting on Sept. 17. The reorganization, along with recent budget cuts, represent "serious challenges," he said. "We are committed to doing whatever is necessary to preserve the essence of MSH."

The 107-bed institution in Côte St. Luc provides intermediate respiratory care, long-term care and palliative care. The hospital was founded in the Laurentians 105 years ago by the Jewish community as a tuberculosis sanitorium.

These institutions are currently governed by centre boards and corporation boards, as well as professional staff. The lay and professional administrations of Maimonides and Eldercare were merged a decade ago under an earlier reform of the system.

"The changes proposed by this bill have the goal of assuring a true integration of services, permitting as well a simpler and more fluid course of care for patients," Barrette said in tabling the proposed law.

"It aims equally to streamline the structures and the bureaucracy in favour of a more rigorous and sound management. Finally, it would result in a clearer line of authority, governance and accountability."

CIJA and the federation plan to consult broadly in the community on this issue.

"We are at the beginning of a long process with the introduction of this bill, and there will be several opportunities to raise these and other concerns in the future, including possibly submitting a brief once our consultation and analysis are complete," Maldoff said. ■

Correction

Our Sept. 24 story, "Local group supports guide dogs in Israel" contained incorrect information. The Canadian Friends Of The Israel Guide Dog Centre For The Blind was founded almost 10 years ago by Morris Samson. Eli Rubenstein serves as chair of the board and Sara Gabriel has been executive director for six years. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Ex-Liberal joins Mount Royal Tory race

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The nomination of a Conservative candidate in Montreal's Mount Royal riding has become a two-man race with Beryl Wajsman's confirmation that he is seeking to run for the party in the next federal election.

The editor of the weekly *Suburban* newspaper for the past seven years, Wajsman is an ex-Liberal organizer who says he switched allegiances in 2006 after Stephen Harper first became prime minister.

Wajsman said he was approached to run earlier, but would not oppose Liberal incumbent Irwin Cotler, for whom he served as executive assistant during the former justice minister's first term.

Wajsman is gracious toward the other three people – all Jewish – who so far have announced they want to be the next MP for Mount Royal – fellow Tory Robert Libman and Liberals Jonathan Goldbloom and Anthony Housefather. "This riding has produced four people who could all do the job well. That speaks well for Mount Royal."

His admiration of Harper is not limited to the prime minister's staunch support for the State of Israel, said Wajsman, whose newspaper is unwaveringly pro-Israel.

Beryl Wajsman hopes to succeed retiring Liberal MP Irwin Cotler

Wajsman has been won over to the Conservatives by Harper's defence, economic and social policies. "The differences between the two parties has never been starker," he said. Under Harper, Canada has been in the forefront on the international stage in defending democracy, and, at home, has done much to "roll back the nanny state," said Wajsman.

He likes the Harper government's tax breaks for the middle class, and thinks tax credits should be even greater for caregivers because of the aging population.

But he especially admires Harper for his refusal to engage in "moral relativism and political equivalency."

"There is good and there is evil, and the Harper government stands against evil.

"Canada has been first up to the plate in standing with its NATO partners."

Wajsman said he is not opposed to maintaining "social safety nets," but does take exception to "the centre-left's" adherence to certain "politically correct" programs.

Among these he cites multiculturalism. While laudable in many aspects, Canada cannot "bend every universal value to please every group," Wajsman said.

"Honour killing, for example, is barbaric, and Stephen Harper has said so."

As for the economy, Wajsman believes the Conservative government's "stewardship is the envy of the G8."

Wajsman, 60, is a lawyer by training and has been active for many years in civil rights and in the media, both print and broadcasting. He believes the strongest skill he would bring to Parliament is being an advocate for his constituents.

He is founder and president of the Institute for Public Affairs of Montreal, described as a national advocacy organization bringing together leaders of business, labour and community action. It has brought to Montreal such speakers as former CIA director James Woolsey and controversial anti-Islamist activist Brigitte Gabriel.

Among the honours he has garnered, Wajsman points to the Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Award, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for Community Service, and a parliamentary certificate of recognition for his contributions to Canadian democracy issued by Liberal MP Marc Garneau.

"I have been on the frontlines – in the media, in the streets and in the legislatures – on every issue of import so that we not only survive but thrive as a community," Wajsman said in his formal remarks launching his bid.

"From language laws to Israel, from protecting individual rights from state abuse to reforming revenue and consumer legislations, from feeding the hungry to protecting our seniors to fighting racism."

He also stated: "This nation stands, unhesitatingly and unequivocally, with the family of free nations fighting an existential challenge to our very civilization... We have opposition parties and leaders who mouth platitudes that we should understand terrorists not only condemn them, and too often choose the dangerous paths of moral relativism and political equivalency." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Two Canadian finalists in sukkah design competition

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The Kehilla Residential Programme will hold its fourth annual "Sukkahville" international design competition at Nathan Phillips Square in downtown Toronto Oct. 14 and 15 to draw attention to the issue of affordable housing in the GTA.

Narrowed down from 80 submissions, eight finalists from all over the world, including two Canadian entries, will present their unique sukkah designs.

Ryerson University architectural science students Daniel Bassakyros, 20, Nivin Nabeel, 24, and Louise Shin, 19, are members of a team that made it to the final round of the competition.

Their sukkah structure, titled *Cloud and Light*, was inspired by the pillars of cloud and fire mentioned in the book of Exodus.

"We reinterpreted the traditional meaning of cloud and fire into something that speaks to the city and modern life. It redefines the idea of cloud as day and fire as night, and instead treats digital light as a new fire," Bassakyros said.

"Just like the pillars were used to guide the Israelites through the desert, our sukkah acts as a beacon and invites users to enter into its protective enclosure."

Bassakyros added that what might stand out most about their structure is its height – it stands nearly five metres high.

He said they used Tyvek, a paper-like material that's primarily used during construction to provide a water barrier between the outer cladding of a structure and the frame, and is hidden from view.

"We've exposed it, revealing the undiscovered properties that it has when light shines through it. The effect is quite spectacular because of the translucent fibrous quality it has – the end result is it gives the interior a cloud-like ambiance. Each side of the Sukkah has four amber light shelves that are meant to wash the interior with a warm glow, which will be more visible at night," he said.

The other Canadian finalist is Troy Fawcett, a 23-year-old Calgary native in his second year of University of Toronto's master's program in architecture.

Fawcett said he was compelled to enter the competition because he wanted to see one of his designs go beyond sketches and renderings.

"I liked the idea of being able to build a design... I felt it could change how I approach the design process," he said, adding that he had never before heard of a sukkah before accepting the Sukkahville challenge.

"I had to do a bit of research," he said with a laugh.

Fawcett's design, called *Megillahs*, is inspired by Jewish scrolls.

"When I was researching, I found the idea of the sukkah very interesting. I thought the idea of it was a kind of paradox. It needs to be open, yet closed. Stable, yet temporary. I was thinking of those ideas and also the idea of the scrolls and how they represent Jewish teaching. I kind of wanted to borrow that idea and use [a similarly shaped]-object as a building material," Fawcett explained.

Two of the sukkah's walls will be made of rounded wooden dowels, he said.

"There are going to be two benches in the middle of the structure so you can walk in and sit on them. You're basically going to be surrounded by two walls made of loose-weave burlap mesh that has been layered a bunch of times, and then on the other side, [will be] a complete wooden wall," Fawcett said.

"I liked the idea of layering and... with the burlap mesh I'm using, when that starts to aggregate it creates enclosure, but at the same time it still feels open because it is layered with a loose material."

He said in addition to helping students hone their architectural design skills, this competition is also a good way to raise awareness about the issue of poverty and affordable housing.

"Nathan Phillips Square is in a really populated area, and having these structures there will be a big attraction, I think. It's a great way to draw people in and get them more excited about the subject." ■

University of Toronto student and Sukkahville international design competition finalist Troy Fawcett works on his sukkah called *Megillahs*. The centre image is a rendering of the finished product. The two images below are renderings of a sukkah structure called *Cloud and Light*, another design chosen as a finalist and imagined by Ryerson University students Daniel Bassakyros, Nivin Nabeel and Louise Shin.

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Haredim's refusal to sit near women causes uproar

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For approximately half an hour at the beginning of her El Al Israel Airlines flight from New York to Tel Aviv Sept. 22, Elana Sztokman watched as the haredi man seated next to her rushed up and down the aisle searching for someone willing to switch seats so that he wouldn't have to sit beside her.

On the same route several hours later, another El Al flight was delayed as haredi men stood in the aisles refusing to sit next to women.

After takeoff, the men resumed their protest until other seats were found for them. A passenger on the flight told the Israeli website *Ynet* that the trip was "an 11-hour nightmare."

Israel's national airline has long had to contend with haredi Jews' insistence on gender separation in the skies. But the two recent incidents – Sztokman's story went viral after she wrote about it in the online magazine *Tablet* – have prompted calls for El Al to resolve the ongoing issue.

Some have suggested the airline should insist that strictly observant passengers sit in their assigned seats. Others say the airline should create gender-segregated sections so that seat maps would not have to be reconfigured on the spot.

"What offends me is the premise that sitting next to me is a problem," said Sztokman, author of the recent book *The War on Women in Israel: A Story of Religious Radicalism and the Women Fighting for Freedom*. "I'm a person first and foremost."

Sztokman, who has faced similar situations on past El Al flights, said she has written to the airline to complain several times but has not heard back.

In a statement responding to an inquiry from *JTA*, El Al made no mention of the September incidents, but said that the airline's staffers "are trying their best to respond to every request of any of the passengers."

An online petition is calling on the airline to provide a small section of gender-segregated seats for an extra fee.

"I do think El Al has a responsibility to make its passengers feel safe and prevent this type of thing from happening," the petition's author, Sharon Shapiro of Chicago, told *JTA*. "I don't think women should be harassed or feel bad or guilty if they can't change seats. I don't think men who feel it's a halachic mandate that they can't sit next to women should be put in a position that they have to nudge and ask.

"Some men become belligerent if their demands aren't met, and spend flights bullying and harassing women who refused to change seats."

An El Al flight from New York to Tel Aviv was disrupted when a haredi man wanted to avoid sitting next to a woman on Sept. 22. FILE PHOTO

Special sections or flights for haredi passengers have been suggested before but never implemented. In a controversial move, some Israeli bus companies separated seating for women and men on several lines in 2010. In 2011, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that forcing such segregation is illegal.

"If they rent the whole plane, El Al can run empty planes," said Anat Hoffman, executive director of the Israel Religious Action Centre, a Reform Jewish group. "But you can't make people move because of their gender."

Hoffman's organization challenged El Al two years ago on gender segregation when an American woman, Debra Ryder, was forced to switch seats after a man refused to sit next to her. A lawyer for Hoffman's group, Orly Erez-Litkhovsky, demanded that Ryder be compensated approximately $14,000 as a result.

El Al rejected the payment demand but said it would revisit its guidelines for flight attendants in terms of having them ask passengers to move or telling people to stay in their seats.

The man who was assigned a seat next to Sztokman's eventually switched with another passenger. Sztokman said she hopes public outcry in the wake of the incident – including outcry from haredim – will push El Al to take action.

"I hope this helps people within the haredi world think twice about whether this is the culture they want, and I hope this encourages women in Israel to speak more," Sztokman said. "We have to speak more. We can't just sit down and keep taking it." ■

JTA

American Orthodox group sues to keep patient on life support

JTA
NEW YORK

The head of an American Orthodox Jewish organization that cares for people with special needs is suing to keep one of its patients on life support.

Samuel Kahn, the director of Hebrew Academy for Special Children (HASC), a New York organization that supports people with special needs, is suing to keep one of his organization's patients on life support, *DNAinfo New York* reported.

Kahn claims that removing Eileen Beth Kramer, 60, from her life support at Maimonides Medical Center would violate her religious beliefs. He petitioned the Brooklyn Supreme Court in September after Kramer's legal guardian, brother Howard Kramer, considered removing her from a ventilator, according to court papers obtained by *DNAinfo New York*.

According to Kahn's court petition, HASC has cared for Kramer in one of its group homes for the past 40 years until she recently became sick. During that time, she kept a kosher diet, observed Shabbat and celebrated Jewish holidays.

"HASC was founded specifically to give people with developmental disabilities an opportunity to live a religious life," said Chaim Wakslak, HASC's clinical director. "Eileen had been living with us for several decades, living a religious life, and part of living religiously is dying religiously. So that is what this case is about."

Howard Kramer maintains that HASC should have no role in the decision. He told *DNAinfo* that his sister, who has a developmental disability, was neither raised religious, nor is currently religious.

She doesn't have the intellectual capability [to understand religion]," Kramer was quoted saying. "She lived [at HASC], she followed their rules, but she couldn't have held deeply religious beliefs because of her disability. She doesn't have any concept of what religion is."

After a first hearing in the Brooklyn Supreme Court on Sept. 18, Judge Larry Martin had issued a temporary restraining order on removing the ventilator. A second hearing in the case was held Sept. 30 before the same judge, whose decision is underway. ■

OPINION

Weighing the cost of Netanyahu-bashing

Gerald Steinberg

Political leaders, at least in democracies, must expect and be prepared to put up with criticism, much of which is unfair and below the belt.

In a democratic process, the task of the opposition is to question the policies of the existing leadership and, ultimately, to try to replace them in the next round of elections. Similarly, the media are tasked with keeping the power elite honest by uncovering scandals, underhanded deals, and policy contradictions.

In Israel, with a political system often characterized as a hyperactive democracy, and a similarly hyperactive press, this process can be said to work too well. The concepts of constructive opposition are largely unknown, and the media are constantly searching for new and more deadly means of attacking the government.

As a result, the scope and intensity of these attacks seem to be over-the-top, and instead of contributing to a healthy democracy, the opposition becomes a major impediment. In the Israeli media, and in *Ha'aretz*, in particular, instead of acting as professional watchdogs, many writers have turned into full-time Benjamin Netanyahu-bashers, offering their own pop-psychology analyses of the prime minister, his wife and, at times, even his children.

Compounding the damage, the internal attacks on Israeli leaders, Netanyahu in particular, are loudly echoed internationally in the media and among officials. Repeating the ridicule aimed at "Bibi" has become a routine and thoughtless process.

This excess is illustrated by the numerous incidents in which derisive comments from American and European officials were picked up on an open microphone, or overhead by journalists. In 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama and then-French president Nicolas Sarkozy were talking about Netanyahu.

Sarkozy said, "I can't stand him. He's a liar," and Obama responded, "You're tired of him; what about me? I have to deal with him every day."

This is contagious, and there are reports of similar attitudes from Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and other European leaders. (To his credit, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government have set an example in staying away from this unjustified loathing. In contrast, some Canadian media, and the CBC in particular, are infected with the disease.)

Disregarding the pop-psychology, Netanyahu is hated largely for his policies and political direction for which he was elected. Like the majority of Israelis, Netanyahu is wary of the simplistic slogans that equate peace with an end to the post-1967 "occupation," and they know that without a serious Palestinian partner, a stable peace is impossible.

Although Netanyahu bowed to Obama's relentless pressure and officially endorsed the "two-state" formula, his and the dominant Israeli analysis is very different from the European and American perception. Similarly, Netanyahu has strong reservations about the West's responses to Iran's illicit nuclear program. But instead of debating the important substantive differences, Obama, Sarkozy and others have resorted to bashing Netanyahu.

These constant attacks, from within and outside, have a cumulative cost. During the Gaza conflict, Netanyahu had no down time, and looked and sounded tired – even exhausted. His face reflected the impact of the tragic deaths of young Israeli soldiers and civilians; the intense rain of rockets; the sniping, including from his own political allies and coalition partners; as well as the periodic friction with the Americans.

In another open-mic incident in July, while Israel deliberately restrained the use of firepower in Gaza, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry mockingly said, "It's a hell of a pinpoint operation," again showing no understanding of the reality on the ground.

As is often noted, but rarely internalized, the responsibilities inherent in the office of prime minister are uniquely complex and severe – there is very little room for error. Few people, including the most active critics, can cope with the levels of complexity and stress required to succeed in this position. And while no one is perfect, and constructive criticism is necessary, the personal vitriol is entirely unjustified. ■

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Palestinians call for American pressure on Israel

ABDULLAH H. ERAKAT
JERUSALEM

As Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas prepares to ask the United Nations Security Council to set a deadline of November 2016 for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, Palestinian officials say the time has come for the United States to stand up to Israel for the first time.

"I always tell the Americans that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a test," Afif Safieh, a longtime Palestinian diplomat told *Media Line*. "Until now we are still waiting for a moment of courage by the international community."

As a former ambassador to the United States, he said the Americans are not an honest broker and have repeatedly sided with Israel, whom he called a "belligerent actor." He said the U.S. is making a mistake by threatening to veto the draft resolution setting a deadline for an Israeli withdrawal from all areas it acquired in 1967.

"To threaten to veto [the resolution] is a shameful thing because all Palestinian positions at the UN are based on positions that successive Americans administrations had approved and voted upon," he claimed, although the United States never set a timetable for an Israeli withdrawal.

The decision to turn to the United Nations again after the UN recognized "Palestine" as a non-member sovereign state in 2012, came as the international community hopes to begin to rebuild the Gaza Strip, heavily damaged during 50 days of Hamas fighting with Israel this summer. The Palestinian Authority recently announced that the new unity government will take over control of Gaza, meaning that Palestinian security forces are likely to be deployed at the Rafah crossing point between Egypt and Gaza.

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah met with UN special envoy Robert Serry and Israeli General Yoav Mordechai to talk about future security arrangements in Gaza. The international community is set to attend a conference in Cairo to discuss Gaza reconstruction.

The United States has repeatedly stressed its belief that any solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be bilateral, in a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It has hinted that if Abbas continues with his plans to bring a resolution with a deadline to the Security Council, the US could cut international aid to the PA.

"I hope the Arab world will give financial security to our people and to the PA so we are no longer to vulnerable to extortion and blackmail," Safieh said.

Abbas had a threat of his own, telling the Palestinian leadership that if there is a UN veto, he could reconsider his security co-operation with Israel.

"I think it would be a mistake and a misperception not to take seriously what Mahmoud Abbas is saying these days," said Safieh, who has also been ambassador to the Hague and the Vatican.

The PA and Israel have been enjoying security co-ordination since the 1993 Oslo peace accords, and Israeli officials have frequently praised the Palestinian security forces. On a number of occasions, Abbas has come under fire from his people who criticized him for continuing the security co-operation with Israel, especially during the Israel-Hamas fighting July that left over 2000 Palestinians dead.

Palestinians have also sharply criticized the Israeli announcement to build more than 2,600 homes in east Jerusalem, an announcement made the same day that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Barack Obama in the White House.

"This settlement will cut all southern parts of the West Bank, Bethlehem, Hebron with Jerusalem," Safieh said. "The U.S. is the main superpower, the U.S. is committed to the two-state solution, and we want the U.S. to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in order to achieve peace based on a two-state solution for the sake of Palestinians and Israelis," he said.

Senior Palestinian official Sabri Saidam agreed that Americans could play a bigger role in advancing peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

"Pressuring Israel is not a formula that kills Israel, but rather gives birth to Palestine," Fatah revolutionary council deputy secretary general Sabri Saidam told the *Media Line*. "Maintaining an Israeli formula that couples security with occupation is a status quo that's totally unacceptable," he said. ■

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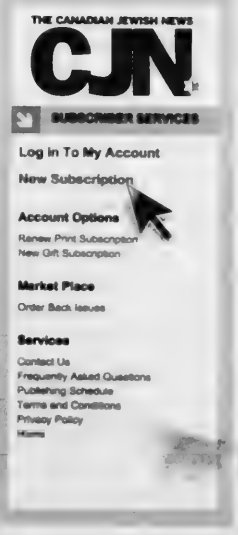

Trying Israel will end chance for peace: Netanyahu

JTA
JERUSALEM

A Palestinian push to try Israeli officials for war crimes at the International Criminal Court would end any chance of reaching a peace deal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu spoke to Army Radio last Friday, a day after the Palestinian Authority's envoy to the United Nations said his government would join the International Criminal Court if the UN Security Council refuses to set a deadline for Israel to withdraw from all Palestinian territories.

"We may end up there," Netanyahu said of the prospect of war crimes charges being brought against Israel at the Hague-based tribunal. "If Abu Mazen attempts it, this will have dire consequences," he added, using another name for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "He could bring the Hague to do it, bringing us to the destruction of any chance of a sane peace deal."

The day before, Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian Authority's UN envoy, told the *Associated Press* that his government has turned to the Security Council "to force Israel to negotiate in good faith the end of the occupation within a time frame."

The Palestinian Authority hopes the council will adopt a draft resolution setting November 2016 as the deadline for an Israeli pullout from the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

"But if this additional door of peace is closed before us, then we will not only join the ICC to seek accountability," Mansour said, "we will join other treaties and agencies" to build evidence "that we exist as a nation, we exist as a state, although the land of our state is under occupation." ■

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel to send mobile Ebola clinics to western Africa

JTA
JERUSALEM

The Israeli government will send three mobile emergency clinics to western Africa in an effort to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus.

Medical experts will be attached to each clinic sent by Mashav-Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, a part of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The staffers will train local health care workers in the operation of the clinic and its equipment, the ministry said in a statement.

In addition, staff training will focus on raising awareness among populations with high potential for infection.

An Israeli team has already been sent to Cameroon. The ministry also sent emergency equipment to the government of Sierra Leone, and in recent weeks shipped personal protection equipment to teams of the African Union.

Last week, the Israeli government reportedly denied a U.S. request to assist in medical relief in Ebola-stricken West African countries.

Meanwhile, the Israeli non-governmental organization IsraAid met with the first lady of Sierra Leone and is in discussions with authorities there about how to provide psychological and social counselling and increase local health awareness.

IsraAid founder Shachar Zahavi told *JTA* that his organization is also in the process of recruiting medical personnel to join those treating the affected areas in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In the coming months, IsraAid plans to send over 30 experts in post-traumatic stress disorder prevention and stress management to West Africa to train local social workers and health workers. ■

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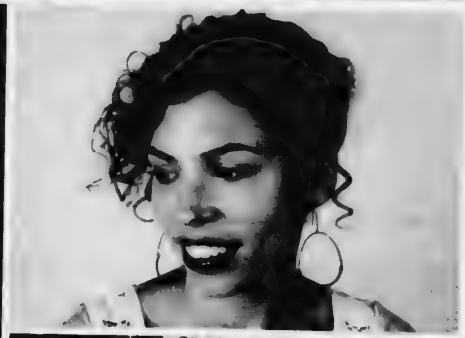
Jewish Life

Toronto sculptor draws inspiration from parasites and the dybbuk



Jess Riva Cooper, top right, is the sculptor behind *Viral Series*, pictured above.

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Jess Riva Cooper is obsessed with fungus. The 33-year-old Toronto ceramic artist, a self-described "science-fiction nerd," imbues her work with themes of human life overgrown with parasitic plant matter.

Cooper's *Viral Series*, a sequence of ceramic sculptures currently on exhibit at the Gardiner Museum as an entry in the fourth annual RBC Emerging Artist People's Award, consists of glazed, Victorian-era female busts sprouting three-dimensional plant and fungal matter from their orifices and scalps. The effect is at once eerie and beautiful, repulsive yet compelling.

"I'm looking at the idea of parasitic plant life, or fungal spores, taking over," Cooper explained in a phone interview. "Of nature taking over our human-made world, taking it back from the acts of destruction we've wrought upon it."

Cooper, who's competing with four other artists for the $10,000 prize – the winner will be determined by public voting and announced Oct. 14 – also gets inspiration from very real environmental phenomena that she said are spookier than any fiction.

She's fascinated by kudzu vines, which are native to southern China and Japan and were brought to the United States in the 1950s as an erosion control method. The vines have no natural predators and can grow at astonishing rates. With climate change creating higher temperatures, Cooper said, this invasive species is beginning to creep farther and farther north, with damaging environmental consequences.

"It's this perfect example of this ludicrous, myopic view of 'this will work perfectly,' without any thought to how this new species of plant would act on the environment," Cooper said.

And "I like that idea of nature bringing chaos to ordered spaces, or reclaiming space by creeping over our world."

Growing up, Cooper was a member of Holy Blossom Temple, and she recently moved back to Toronto from the United States, where she did a master's in ceramics at the Rhode Island School of Design and taught ceramics at schools in Oregon and Chicago.

Though she left Jewish day school after Grade 4, the Yiddish folklore she was read as a child – particularly the story of the dybbuk, a malicious spirit thought to possess the body of another – has greatly influenced her work, and is intrinsically linked to her conception of irrepressible nature.

"That idea of the dybbuk taking over and consuming the human body is similar to this loss of control you get with a parasitic or plant entity that takes over a building or a highway."

Cooper suggested that "zombie" or cordyceps fungus, which is found in the Amazon rainforest and infects a host, then replaces the latter's tissue [think that scene in *Planet Earth* where the fungus kills an insect and starts growing out of its corpse], is similar to the idea of a dybbuk.

"It's this automaton creature doing someone – or something – else's bidding," she said, adding that, as dybbuk is an abbreviation for *dibbuk min ha-hizonim* ("clinging from the outside"), *hizonim* can be translated as outsider.

"It's that idea of the fear of the other, the fear of the strength of nature – his unexpected thing that we try to order."

Her view of nature reclaiming the man-made world is not, however, wholly cynical. "I like looking at the ways feminist writers have reinterpreted these patriarchal stories [like that of the dybbuk]," she said.

She referred to Rachel Elior, an Israeli professor of Jewish philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who says the dybbuk was a mechanism used by women or other marginalized groups to escape from an oppressive social order, "like putting a protective garment over top."

"I like thinking that having these seemingly violent plants overtake our world is maybe a way of us being protected from this world we created… perhaps the dybbuk isn't necessarily bad and the kudzu vines taking over whole valleys aren't bad. Maybe this eventual symbiotic relationship [with the other] will start to occur." ■

Voting for the award can be done online at www.gardinermuseum.on.ca or at the museum, until Oct. 12. The winner will be announced at a closing reception at the Gardiner Museum Oct. 14.

From chorus lines to the punch lines

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rita Rudner says that once you have a passion in life, the rest takes care of itself – and it sure has for her.

Since moving from Miami to New York at the age of 15, the comedian has packed houses from New York's Carnegie Hall to the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles and many places in between.

It was while appearing in *Annie* on Broadway that Rudner started to check out Manhattan's comedy clubs. By the early '80s, Rudner says she took a full-time leap from chorus lines to punch lines and was soon a regular guest on both *Late Night With David Letterman* and *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*.

"I do lots of jokes about relationships and about living in the world today – about waking up and trying to get through it," says the 61-year-old comedian, who lives in both Las Vegas and Monarch Beach, Calif. "Someone once said to me after a show that they didn't know comedy could be that relaxing. I just like for people to be happy for an hour and a half. I like people to feel it is a unique experience, like the same experience won't happen again to the next audience, because it never does. Every audience is different."

Rudner says she learned to deal with adversity through comedy.

"Jewish people have had to deal with lots of adversity. My dad was somebody who, when on the dark side, would make a joke about it. Subconsciously, I kind of learned that from him. My mother was very disorganized, so I've come away with being disorganized and sarcastic."

Best known for her epigrammatic one-liners, Rudner has performed more than 2,000 shows in Las Vegas over the last 14 years and will be back in Vegas at Harrah's Casino this fall. In fact, she is the longest-running solo show in Sin City's history and was named the Las Vegas' Comedian of the Year nine years in a row.

Rudner has found success in other formats too, including specials on PBS, Showtime and HBO, plus a BBC television show and a syndicated daily TV talk show called *Ask Rita*. She has also penned five bestselling non-fiction books: *Naked Beneath My Clothes, Rita Rudner's Guide to Men, I Still Have It…I Just Can't Remember Where I Put It*, plus the novels *Tickled Pink* and *Turning the Tables*.

Rudner describes comedy as the root of what she does. She credits her husband of 26 years, Martin Bergman, for encouraging her to try out new formats. She says that although she would have been perfectly happy writing jokes and comedy essays, he challenged her to write a film, a book, a novel, and to tour abroad. Her comedy act and essay she does solo, but everything else is a collaboration with him.

The couple's first produced film script was *Peter's Friends* starring Emma Thompson, Kenneth Branagh, and Rudner. Their latest film, *Thanks*, premiered at the 2011 Palm Springs International Film Festival, garnering several awards.

Rudner and Bergman's first play was *Room 776*. Their second play, based on Rita's first novel *Tickled Pink*, premiered at the Laguna Playhouse in 2012.

Next year, Rudner will appear in a new play, *Act Three*, by David Ambrose & Claudia Nellens, to be directed by Bergman and co-star actor Charles Shaughnessy.

Toronto area comedy fans will get to witness the passion of this multi-award-winning comedian and actress firsthand when she brings her act to the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on Oct. 15 at 8 p.m. Although she is no stranger to Toronto stages, this will be her first visit to Richmond Hill. ■

Rita Rudner performs in Toronto on Oct. 15.

For tickets to see Rita Rudner at Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, call: 905-787-8811.

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Exhibit focuses primarily on sound

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If you walk into the Koffler Gallery this fall, don't be surprised if you feel unnerved. The exhibit floor, at the Artscape Youngplace on Shaw Street, has loud sounds coming from all corners. Stand in the middle and it's hard not to be stirred by the cacophony.

The gallery's newest showcase, titled *Pardes*, emphasizes sound over image. *Pardes* means both "orchard" and "paradise" in Hebrew. In Jewish folklore, four great sages – Akiva, Ben Azzai, Elisha ben Abuyah and Ben Zoma – entered Pardes. They each met different fates in the mystical space.

Likewise, people interested in coming to the gallery's *Pardes* will encounter the works of four great artists, all of whom are secular Jews: Nadav Assor, Ira Eduardovna, Amnon Wolman and Nevet Yitzhak. To approach the notion of mysticism, the four artists connect back to the religious roots of their Jewish identity, says Mona Filip, a curator and director of the gallery.

"It was [curator] Liora Belford's intention to work primarily with sound in this exhibition," Filip told *The CJN*. "Mysticism starts where language ends."

Wolman, who works primarily with sound and music, said the orchard is about finding information. With his *SoundTallit*, visitors can sit and wrap themselves in a tallit that has speakers attached to the inside. Hymns and prayers emanate from the speakers.

The Israel-based artist said that since Judaism has multiple religious sects within it, there is a feeling of division between the different groups. Since anyone can wear the tallit at the exhibit – regardless of gender or religious background – the piece hopes to unite.

"If you think about the tallit as a symbol of something that covers and protects us… it's not a divisive force but could be viewed as a unifying element," Wolman said.

In another artwork where audio speakers play a key role, *SoundBook – Architecture*, Wolman puts a speaker at the back of a text on the history of architecture. As one opens the book, which has many holes in the middle that slice through the words on the page, he or she slowly exposes the speaker and can hear the sound more clearly.

Meanwhile, in the gallery's most awe-inspiring work, Nadav Assor's *Ophan*, a mechanical, spider-like object rests on the ground. The device, triggered by nearby motion, takes flight when someone approaches.

The whirring of the Ophan in flight merges with Hebrew chants coming from a speaker on top of the object. Assor said he was interested in connecting modern technology with ancient mythology.

"We're making these crazy, powerful flying machines," he told *The CJN*, referring to drones. "Where does the urge to do that come from?"

Assor said the Ophan was inspired by the creature of that name that appears as a vision in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel has a vision of a Chariot of God, referred to as the Ophan. "It's described as being a wheel within a wheel surrounded by eyes," Assor said, adding that a higher spirit can move the Ophan and control the way it moves in the world.

"As a secular Jew growing up in Israel, you're always immersed in religion whether you like it or not," he said. "There's also this culture [in Israel] that almost religiously worships technological innovation."

In a work by Israeli artist Nevet Yitzhak, we see televised footage from the Israel Broadcasting Authority Arabic Orchestra. However, the instrumental sounds we hear over the speakers do not quite match what is shown on screen.

The manipulative sounds in Yitzhak's piece reflect the tension in the orchestra, Filip said. The orchestra was composed of many Arabs who immigrated to Israel. The colliding sounds show how difficult it is to create a cohesive cultural identity in a state where so many religions are neighbours.

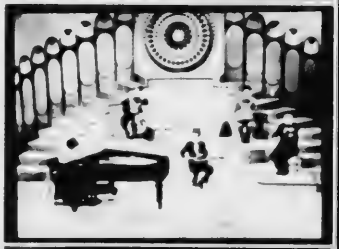
"[The immigrants] brought with them their own Jewish identity that was very much interlaced with Arabic roots," Filip said. "It wasn't always easy to reconcile. The Israeli identity wanted to be more European and put aside these Middle Eastern influences."

While Assor, Wolman and Yitzhak all work with sound, young artist Ira Eduardovna works more often as a multimedia artist.

In her new audiovisual work, *A Thousand Years*, she juxtaposes a crude sitcom setting with a choir singing a solemn song. The text the choir sings is from the prologue of A.B. Yehoshua's *A Journey to the End of the Millennium*. The words ask about how we will be remembered as we approach the apocalypse.

With such striking sounds coming from many sides and corners, the exhibit creates a foreboding, textured, new sound. It is not a small, peaceful walk into the orchard. ■

Pardes is open at the Koffler Gallery until Nov. 30, 2014. Admission is free.



Clockwise top left: Ira Eduardovna's *A Thousand Years*, Amnon Wolman's *SoundTallit*, Nadav Assor's Ophan, and *A Great Joy Tonight*, Nevet Yitzhak's new art piece.

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Chagall's wife inspires *Bella: The Colour of Love*

Theresa Tova plays Bella Chagall in ***Bella: The Colour of Love.*** DAHLIA KATZ PHOTO

> *We are giving voice to a woman artist who lived in the shadow of her man. It is time that her jewels, her talent, was recognized.*

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Bella: The Colour of Love, a play inspired by the life of Bella Chagall, the writer and muse for her famous husband artist Marc Chagall, stars multi-award winning actor and singer Theresa Tova.

"Bella Chagall wrote two lovely narratives as a young girl living in the same city as [Marc] Chagall in Vitebsk in Russia," Tova says. "They both came from the chassidic influences of their parents and they were still steeped in that tradition. When Jewry was being decimated by Hitler, she went back and wrote these amazing storybooks in her mother tongue...and she hadn't spoken Yiddish in years."

Tova first read one of her books in English and wasn't enthralled by it. Then, while in New York, she found a copy in Yiddish which was her first language. The actress fell in love with Bella's voice, which she feels paints with words the way Chagall paints his canvass.

"She wrote and he painted the same stories and that fascinated me," says Tova. "Bella has a chapter in her book called "The Birthday," about the first night that they go 'flying,' obviously code for consummating their love affair. What she describes is exactly what he's painted in that iconic picture called *The Birthday*. It is so beautiful... you get this back story on his paintings, which makes you understand why he said, 'I didn't paint surrealism and fantasy, I painted reality,' you see he was painting falling in love with her and you get that from her writing too.

"What I am most proud of is that we are giving voice to a woman artist who lived in the shadow of her man. It is time that her jewels, her talent was recognized."

Tova co-wrote the play with her friend Mary Kerr, an award-winning set, costume and event designer. She knew Kerr had done her university thesis on Chagall and she is often likened to Chagall because of her fantastical sets. Their idea was first commissioned by the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts in 2011.

Since then the play has been retooled. This production by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company is the first full-theatrical run with new costumes, painting and songs.

The show is underscored with original music composed and played by Matt Herskowitz, with surrealistic movement choreographed by Danny Grossman and set against the backdrop of larger-than-life projections of Chagall's paintings curated by Kerr.

"Like Chagall, I consider myself a universal artist, but I have to say that some of my greatest success has been when I have delved into Jewish subjects be it the great anarchist Emma Goldman in *Ragtime* or in my mother's story *Still the Night*," Tova says. "I am a cultural Jew, my grandparents were Orthodox so I am not unfamiliar with that world. I don't do work in my creative field because it's Jewish, I am not political that way, I do it because it is a story I understand and need to tell. I have more invested in myself as an artist than to do it just because it's Jewish, but I will use Jewish themes and make them the best art they can be." ■

HGJTC's Bella: The Colour of Love runs at the Studio Theatre in the Toronto Centre for the Arts from Oct. 15 – Nov. 2, 2014, at 8 p.m. www.hgjewishtheatre.com.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Eichmann book both fascinating and puzzling

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Bettina Stangneth's *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*, arrived this fall, in translation from its 2011 German-language version, to great fanfare.

In many reviews it was suggested that Stangneth's book offered an overdue critique of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. But Stangneth's title, as well as her reviewers, overstate this relationship. Arendt is a small player in the sprawling portrait the book presents of Adolf Eichmann in hiding until his capture by Israeli agents in 1960.

Arendt's reports from Jerusalem, written initially for *The New Yorker*, come up in a sustained way only once, as Stangneth considers Arendt's view of Eichmann's "rather modest mental gifts" and his "vague notions" of the German philosophical tradition. One of the weaker aspects of Stangneth's argument is the claim that Arendt's response to Eichmann's crimes was undermined by her having missed out on a cache of "texts" and "others sources . . . withheld from the trial observers." These include memoiristic works Eichmann wrote in hiding and once he was in an Israeli jail, and transcripts made in the late 1950s from taped conversations between Eichmann and Nazi supporters in Buenos Aires.

> *How did we lose track of so many Nazis; how were so many re-accepted into society?*

Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer

Bettina Stangneth
Knopf

Stangneth's interest in Eichmann's postwar memoirs is both fascinating and puzzling. In the case of the recording transcripts, she goes to great length to set the scene in which they were made, in the home of Willem Sassen, the owner of the pro-Nazi Buenos Aires-based publishing firm Dürer Verlag. She comments on how attendees referred to each other ("my dear Comrade") and on whether alcohol fueled the discussion. But her report on what was actually said is anti-climactic.

Ex-Nazis and their Argentinian fellow travellers discussed international press coverage of Germany; they assigned themselves reading lists of recent Holocaust-related texts and read long passages aloud; Eichmann is heard, *sotto voce*, dismissively commenting on someone who has left the room.

Stangneth's careful reading of Eichmann's memoiristic writings has a similarly disappointing outcome. The more she tells us about them, the more it seems that there is little of great importance in them. They are, to the last, self-exculpatory.

When quoted at length they have an overblown, mind-numbing style, which makes them next to unreadable. And Stangneth herself concludes that in all of these documents, Eichmann reiterates the National Socialist ideology based on a "doctrine in the inevitable final war of the races," which provides "the intellectual basis for genocide and for carrying out 'screening' even on ethnic Germans, in the 'euthanasia' project to which Eichmann also gave his wholehearted support."

The outcome of Stangneth's close reading of memoir and transcripts is twofold: one is nauseated, even overwhelmed by the stupid assertiveness of the Nazi myth, while we feel convinced that Arendt was not badly served by the documents and testimony she had at hand in Jerusalem and after.

Where Stangneth does make an impressive contribution is in her willingness to follow Eichmann after the war. From the hut on Lüneberg Heath in northern Germany, where he husbanded chickens under an assumed name, to an Italian port with the help of papal representatives, to his first job in the Argentine forestlands with a Peronist hydro company, to the urban enclave of leftover Nazis hiding out – many in plain sight – under Juan Perón's protection. In her description of these scenarios she is thorough, journalistically lively in her depictions, and always willing to express exasperation and wonderment at the possibilities for ex-Nazis to start new lives in the postwar years.

This material demands a different title, one unburdened by questions associated with Arendt's interpretation of Eichmann's crimes and their reception in an Israeli court room. Stangneth's research stands on its own and raises important challenges for postwar culture. How, she wonders, did we lose track of so many major Nazis; how were so many re-accepted in society; and, have we misunderstood the repercussions, in our own lives, of the acts of men like Eichmann?

The unreadability of Eichmann's own writing is a provocation in its own right. Most readers will, I think, find Stangneth's quotations from these documents nauseating, even undigestible. A work of fiction known as the *Roman Tucumán* is said to sit unread in the Eichmann family archive. In a note, Stangneth tells us that the family will not consider the manuscript's publication without "an appropriate level of renumeration." This weird assertion reads like a blackmail threat; Eichmann's descendants will only release his final word if someone will agree to make them rich.

Eichmann's unpublished fiction, possibly more than any other, is a work that we might hope no publisher will ever take an interest in. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

KOFFLER CENTRE LAUNCHES JEWISH COMIX ANTHOLOGY

At one time comic books could not be considered serious "books" but today, with the popularity of the graphic novel and other illustrated literary forms, comic books can hold their heads high. The Koffler Centre of the Arts and AH Comics jointly present a book launch of Jewish Comix Anthology (Volume 1), a 256-page hardcover collection of folk tales, stories and myths told by some of the biggest names in comic book history including **Art Spiegelman**, **Robert Crumb**, **Will Eisner**, **Harvey Pekar** and **Michael Netzer**.

The evening also features live music, original artwork, autographs, interviews and wine. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Thursday Oct. 16, 7 to 10 p.m. Free admission.

Expect more comic-book excitement beginning Dec. 20 when the Art Gallery of Ontario opens a retrospective show on the works of Pulitzer Prize-winning illustrator **Art ("Maus") Spiegelman**. The excitement spills over to Jan. 26, 2015, when the Koffler Gallery presents an evening with Spiegelman at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema.

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Holocaust Survivor Memoirs: In recognition of Holocaust Education Week, the Azrieli Foundation and the City of Markham jointly present an evening of film and readings featuring four newly published Holocaust authors and their books. *The Hidden Package* by author **Claire Baum** was previously mentioned in this column. The other three titles are *Joy Runs Deeper*, by **Bronia** and **Joseph Beker**; *Suddenly the Shadow Fell*, by **Leslie Meisels**; and *Traces of What Was*, by **Steve Rotschild**. Flato Markham Theatre, 101 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. Oct. 28, 7 p.m.; doors open at 6:15 p.m. Admission free but reservations required; please reserve by Oct. 21. Guests receive complimentary copies of the memoirs. www.azrielifoundation.org, 416-322-5928.

• • •

Toronto Jewish Film Society: The film on offer is *My Mexican Shiva*, an unusual comedy about Mexican Jewry that has been called "a spicy treat." Outrageousness abounds as the family of the late Moishe prepare to sit shivah, and the angels of light and darkness place a wager on who will accompany the departed's soul to the afterlife. With guest speaker **Debbie Gaysinsky**. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Oct. 19, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets $15, $10 available one hour before each screening.

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Israeli Air Force on Film: Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea & A Movie features the Canadian premiere of director **Roberta Grossman**'s documentary *Above and Beyond: The Birth of the Israeli Air Force*. Grossman participates in a Q&A at each of the two screenings. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. $15. Sunday Oct. 19, 1:15 and 4:15 p.m. www.tjff.com

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At the Galleries

• After surviving a battle with cancer, Torontonian **Emma Tushinski** and friends **Matt Cohen**, **Ben Cowley** and **Zac Cooper** founded Project Art, an art sale with food and music to benefit Sunnybrook Hospital's Odette Cancer Centre. 99 Sudbury, Thursday Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $60. project-art.org

• "Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation" offers a look at the history of one of downtown Toronto's oldest Jewish institutions. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Oct. 30.

• *Pardes*, an exhibition of works by sound and multimedia artists **Nadav Assor**, **Ira Eduardovna**, **Amnon Wolman** and **Nevet Yitzhak**, continues at the Koffler Gallery, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St., until Nov. 30.

• The works of eight finalists who have reimagined the traditional sukkah by creating architecturally unique structures are to be showcased at Nathan Phillips Square, Wednesday Oct. 15, 9 to 5 p.m. Presented by Kehilla Residential Programme and Habitat for Humanity Toronto. www.sukkahville.com

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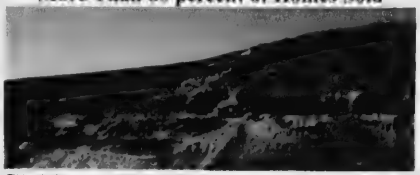
Out of Town

A rare cache of Byzantine-era antiquities discovered in 2013, including the largest gold medallion with Judaic symbols known in existence, are on public display for the first time in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. The treasures, including gold coins and silver and gold jewelry, were found in two cloth bags in a Byzantine-era building near the southern wall of the Temple Mount during excavations led by **Dr. Eilat Mazar** of Hebrew University. The cache was likely hidden at the beginning of the 7th century, possibly during the Persian invasion of 614 CE. ■

Record Demand for Ramat Givat Zeev: More Than 60 percent of Homes Sold



Slowly but sure, without great fanfare, the Ramat Givat Zeev neighborhood north of Yerushalayim, is breaking sales records and is moving steadily towards realizing the dream of this unique neighborhood in the Jerusalem Hills. The sales department of Nofei Israel, the developer of the project, has reported heightened interest, and the signature of many contracts. Since the municipal urban plan was accepted several months ago, sales have spiked and in all more than 60 percent of the units in the neighborhood have been sold.

To date, all the three room apartments have been sold, and there are fewer than 10 four room apartments left. There are several five room apartments and garden and penthouse units still available. Furthermore, the Ramah on the Park project, two unique buildings in the neighborhood overlooking the park, has recently been put on the market.

The developers of the project emphasize that the impetus for the heightened sales – aside for the many advantages the project offers – is the rapid pace of development and constructions at the site. The developers have completed laying ground for 70 percent of the roads in the neighborhood, and within three months, all the lots for the Binei Berticha section will be cleared for construction. This is an impressive pace that proves the developers' intentions to meet timetables so that those who purchased lots for the villas can begin to build their dream homes as soon as possible.

News of the unique neighborhood is spreading and generating waves. The composition of families planning to settle there is exceptional, and includes quality Israeli families as well as new olim from Orthodox communities in the United States who have decided to settle there. The revolutionary concept combines a green setting with spacious parks, playgrounds, landscaped gardens, wide roads, brightly lit walking paths and intersections with water fountains, with suitable education institutions and a variety of community facilities.

Ramat Givat Zeev is the flagship project of Nofei Israel, a company with a solid record in developing housing solutions for the charedi community in Israel. The neighborhood offers a range of housing options: some 150 private homes with individually planned designs, two family cottages, and some 250 large apartments. Most of the private lots have been sold, and marketing of the apartments is in full swing.

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What's New

OCT. 8- OCT. 15

by Lila Sarick

Thursday 9	Friday 10	11	12	13	Tuesday 14	Wednesday 15
Sukkot	Sukkot				Tour Sukkahville	

Sunday, Oct. 12

SUKKOT CARNIVAL
A Sukkot carnival will be held at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto synagogue, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 613 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Featuring rides, petting zoo, games, music and food.

Tuesday, Oct. 14

LUNCH AND LEARN
Corey Keeble, curator at the Royal Ontario Museum, discusses "The architecture of Canadian synagogues," 12:15 p.m., as part of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's Lunch and Learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352 or email mandy@bethtikvahtoronto.org

SUKKOT FESTIVAL
Celebrate Sukkot at Shoresh's Kavanah Garden, 3-6 p.m., 18 Lebovic Campus Dr., Richmond Hill. Harvest vegetables and enjoy apples and honey from Shoresh's Bela Farms in the sukkah. $6 per person, $18/ family.

NETWORK FOR GOOD
Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation offers a one-day professional development and mentoring experience for young professionals and entrepreneurs with top CEOs while raising funds for neonatal care. Register at www.youngheartsceoday.com.

SUKKAHVILLE
Tour sukkahs built by architectural firms from around the world, Nathan Phillips Square, today and tomorrow. Awards ceremony, Oct. 15, 12:15 p.m. Sponsored by Kehilla Residential Program.

Deadline Reminder:
Deadlines will change because of the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 30 is Oct. 20. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Grand opening

Members of the Baruch and Weisz families attended the official opening of the Baruch/Weisz Outpatient Care Clinic at North York General Hospital Sept. 23. The new clinic consolidates several outpatient clinics and is intended to decrease wait times and improve access to care at the hospital.

COMING EVENTS

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

ADULT CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS
Baycrest is offering support groups for adult children of Holocaust survivors. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or **Judi Cohen**, ext. 2322, or email syaakobi@baycrest.org.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

MORASHA CLASSES
Seymour Epstein teaches a course on "Human sexuality in the biblical narrative," Oct. 22, 29, 11:15 a.m. **Shayna Kravetz** teaches "Six poems for modern Jews," Nov. 5-Dec.10, 11:15 a.m. Classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

HEBREW CLASSES
- Conversational Hebrew, ulpan method, with **Yael Lev**: intermediates, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m., advanced, Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. Beginners Hebrew with **Levana Krieger,** Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.
- Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for beginners, starting Oct. 21, 7:30 p.m., and for intermediates, starting Oct. 23. Call 416-487-3281.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING
National Council of Jewish Women shows the film *The Whistleblower* about human trafficking, **Oct. 22,** 6:30 p.m., North York Library, 5120 Yonge St. RSVP 416-633-5100.

MAH-JONG MADNESS
Canadian Hadassah-Chaverot chapter holds a mah-jong fundraiser, **Oct. 26,** 1-4:30 p.m. Earl Bales Community Centre, $40. Call 416-630-8373 to reserve, singles or groups.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El begins its fall lecture series, **Oct. 20** with **Nelson Wiseman** discussing "Is Canada a failed democracy?" Series runs until Nov. 17. All lectures at 2 p.m. $45/series, $12/lecture, 416-449-3880.

MOMMY AND ME SHABBAT
Chabad of Markham is holding a Shabbat program for parents and children, up to 18 months, starting **Oct. 31**, 9:30 a.m. Free, but call 905-886-0420, ext. 227, to register.

FRUMBA
Beth Tikvah offers Frumba (exercise to Jewish-themed music) starting **Oct. 22**, 1:30 p.m. 416-221-3433.

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Fiona Gold Kroll discusses "A stone for Benjamin: My genealogical search for my great-uncle," **Oct. 22**, Temple Sinai, 8 p.m.

YIDDISH CLASSES
All levels of Yiddish classes are offered starting Oct. 19, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd. Call **Ed** 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

MEKOROT CLASSES
Rabbi Noah Sonenberg begins a yearlong class studying Talmud Kiddushin, Sundays, starting Oct. 26, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. **Rifka Sonenberg** teaches a 5-week class on the positive commandments of Shabbat, starting Oct. 29, Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 1:30 p.m. wwww.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

- Widows/widowers over 65: A 6-session group for men and women over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts Oct. 21, 11 a.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 1700 Bathurst St.
- Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Oct. 22, 2 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave., or Oct. 23, Lipa Green Centre, 7 p.m.
- Changing your ADHDitude. Living with adult ADHD: A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and want to learn skills to create positive change in their lives. Starts Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, Oct. 29, 9:30 a.m., Lebovic Jewish Community Campus, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Walk a mile in my shoes: A workshop for parents and professionals wanting to understand more about learning disabilities in children and teens, Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Spousal Caregiver Group** for adults over 55 caring for a spouse with dementia or physical illness meets for 6 weeks starting Oct. 20 at Bathurst-Finch Hub. Sponsored by Circle of Care and Family Caregivers Connections. Call **Tessa Wassyng,** 905-738-1128, ext. 323.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Sukkot lunch, Oct. 14, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Ave. Members, $20, non-members $25. RSVP required, **Arnold Foss,** 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park** (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Barber, Oct. 9, 10 a.m. Casino Woodbine, Oct. 15. Couples dance Oct. 19, 7 p.m. Tuesdays, balance and co-ordination class, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Seniors gentle fitness** is offered at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W., Mondays at 10 a.m. Feldenkrais awareness through movement. $55/4 classes. 416-665-9050.
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Sharoni Sibony** discusses "100 years of the First Narayever Congregation," Oct. 23. Doors open 1 p.m.; program starts 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 14, **Robert Shechter** discusses "Vancouver Island," 10 a.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation**. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- JCC Daycare and preschool has limited nursery, JK and SK spaces for this year. Open houses Oct. 15 and Oct. 22, 10 a.m. Call **Kailah,** ext. 4351 to book a tour.
- PJ Plus, a parent and child (ages 18 months to 3 years) program of active Jewish learning runs Oct. 19-Dec. 21.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "The genius of Michaelangelo," Oct. 14, 1 p.m.
- Enjoy Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30 p.m.
- Cantorial soloist **Rachel Shubert** presents a workshop on music and well-being, Nov. 18, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents "The Jews of Old Toronto," Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What is a Jewish film?" Nov. 5-26, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation* is at the gallery until Oct. 30.
- Sukkot after dark. Enjoy a musical rooftop *Havdalah* and art party, Oct. 11, 8:15-10:30 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *My Mexican Shiva*, Oct. 19, 4 and 7 p.m., with guest speaker **Debbie Gaysinsky.** $15/$10, box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- PJ Plus a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children, starts Oct. 19. Children 18-30 months at 2 p.m.; 2-1/2 to 3 years at 3:30 p.m.
- Hebrew Institute starts the week of Oct. 20. For info and placement tests, anniemg@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, Oct. 20 and 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Sign up for beginner Yiddish. Starts Oct. 23, 7-9 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Artificial paradise: The dark side of the Beatles' utopian dream," Oct. 20-Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
- Harmonia: Downtown Jewish Youth Choir meets Sundays 4-6 p.m., starting Oct. 19. Conducted by **Yonah Sienna.** harmonia@mnjcc.org.
- JCC Fitness: MELT and Pilates Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.; MELT Method – full body for joint pain and injury management, Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- **Steve Rose** teaches an art course, "What would Kandinsky do?" Oct. 23-Dec. 18, 1 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Joan Lowenstein** teaches watercolour printmaking, for adults and children, Oct. 21-Nov. 11.
- PJ Plus, a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children runs Oct. 19- Dec. 21.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches Fundamentals of drawing and painting, Nov. 19-Dec. 10, 10 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents, "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," an examination of how films soaked up political and cultural attitudes, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. ■

WRY BREAD

What you might learn from the rabbi

David Levine

Dear Simon and Judith,

I hope this letter finds you well. We wanted to thank you again for coming to our Josh's bar mitzvah celebration last week. Josh asked me to say thank you for the Amazon gift certificate. He is hoping to save up for a Helicopter Drone that drops water balloons.

I'm also writing because our conversation has been on my mind all week, and I wanted to try to better explain what you saw in our synagogue.

Our rabbi is a good man, much beloved by many in our community. He is also an older man, which would explain the pacing of his speech and the problems he had remembering names – but he has successfully thwarted five or six attempted board ousters – and you don't do that without friends.

It's important to understand that our rabbi is trained as a scholar, more than a speaker. His language draws on an ancient and spiritual tradition that hasn't been exposed to the softening influences of modern culture. It would be unfair to judge the things he says by what they mean in the 21st century.

That being said, I can understand why you might have been taken aback by the morning's sermon, which is why I feel compelled to rise to his defence.

First of all, our rabbi isn't a racist. *Everyone* refers to Jews as "the Chosen People" – the rabbi was just pointing out that, by definition, no one else has been chosen. That doesn't make us *better* than the rest of the world, it makes us different. Like the rabbi said: Jews are like an oldest child. God may love all His children equally, but as the oldest, we have more responsibilities than the younger, incorrect faiths do.

The rabbi's political stances may not be everyone's cup of tea – we don't always agree with them ourselves – but I have to take issue with your use of the word "genocide" to describe anything he had to say. The context you're picking on was a hypothetical, what-if, worst-case scenario involving existential crises. (And I don't believe he was seriously suggesting the things he was talking about. Why would he have been laughing so hard?)…

And commenting on the physical features of certain ethnicities isn't racist, either – I think we can all agree that certain ethnicities tend to look certain ways – and the rabbi was just emphasizing that fact to comical effect. I'm quite sure he didn't mean anything hateful. Stereotypes never hurt anyone.

I also can't believe I have to say this, but the rabbi's comments about women have obviously been misunderstood: the rabbi wasn't *saying* those things about the women in his congregation. He would never do that – as a proud father of four girls and a devoted husband of 24 years, I can assure you he totally "gets" feminism, and all the things it might imply. He was merely quoting those rabbis who did say those things, and applying those lessons to the modern day.

I'm proud to say that our synagogue has been encouraging women to serve on the board for almost 10 months now, and I'll have you know that our rabbi was instrumental in suppressing the opposition to that change.

It's true that when Josh was called up to the pulpit, the rabbi may not have remembered who he was – there are a lot of bar mitzvahs in our community. But still, so many of the nice things he said about Josh were true, apart from his last name, his hobbies and where he goes to school. And the rabbi has been such a good influence on Josh that they're going to continue studying together, even now that the bar mitzvah is over. I can't wait to have you both over for dinner soon, so you can hear how excited Josh gets after studying with the rabbi. There's no telling what he might learn next! ■

Family Moments

Mazel tov to Robin & Ian on your engagement! Parents are Karen Garmaise, Israel Blume, Ilene & Larry Greenberg. Proud grandparents Florence Garmaise and Lorraine Greenberg.

Henry, born June 1. Parents, Natalie & Michael Rapps. Grandparents, Wendy & Stephen Rapps, Sharon & Lorne Shapiro. Great-grandparents, Janice & Eddie David, Norma & Max Borinsky.

Brooke Dana is three – daughter of Neil & Elizabeth Rosenberg, Thornhill. Granddaughter of Sav & Rhona Rosenberg, Laval, Que. Sigmund & Barbara Szartes, Toronto.

Mazel tov to our beautiful, young-at-heart mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother, Rita Ginsberg. 93 years young, bis 120.

Happy 100th birthday to Gina Jancovici on Oct. 20. Lots of love from Rosita & Irwin, Sharon & Jeff, Joanne & Dennis.

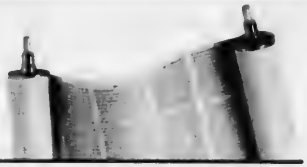
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Sukkot | Exodus 33:12 - 34:26



Rabbi Aaron Katchen says God seeks a relationship with us
Rabbi Michal Shekel suggests Sukkot is a time to establish partnerships
Rabbi Howard Morrison recalls childhood memories of dwelling inside the Sukkah

Aaron Katchen

This time of year often brings me to reflect upon my relationship with God. Through my own journeys within Judaism, I have struggled with the manner in which God is most often mentioned in many of the spiritual communities in which I have found myself. God is regularly spoken about as a form, a name to be inserted into the right place in a sentence – be it a prayer, a verse, or statement, such as "Baruch HaShem."

It took me a long time to realize what was missing for me: God as relationship. I understand that it's difficult to speak about something intangible, such as God. I can only visually see the outcome of God's action, rather than God's self.

There are two hints in our tradition that have helped sustain me and inform me that God is looking for a relationship. The first real conversation between humanity and God in the Torah comes after Adam and Eve disobey God's command. God asks Adam, "*Ayeka?*" "Where are you?" God knows where he is, but uses a question to provoke relationship. The second is found in our structure of blessings. The traditional formula starts as, "Blessed are you, Lord our God…" Before we jump to a formal name for God, we use the informal, intimate second person.

After all of the power and solemnity of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I see too many people stop their "relationship" with God there. This is too bad, for immediately after the High Holidays comes Sukkot, which is about happiness, and then Shmini Atzeret, which is about presence – just being present with God. Through Sukkot and Shmini Atzeret, God is saying to the Jewish People, "You have passed through Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Here I am, where are you?" ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

Other than a brief mention of Chag Ha'asif, the feast of ingathering (Exodus 34:22), there is seemingly little that is Sukkot related in the parshah for Shabbat Chol Hamoed Sukkot. In fact, the parshah begins with a moment of crisis, when Moses is back on Mount Sinai following the incident of the Golden Calf. The heart of the matter is contained in Moses' dramatic outburst: "Oh, let me behold Your Presence!" (Exodus 33:18)

This comes from the leader who was enraged when he found his people dancing around the Golden Calf, an idol constructed out of their insecurities over an absent leader and an unseen God. Now Moses, closer to God than any human being, confesses the difficulty he feels in this relationship with the unseen Eternal One.

What could be the end for our covenant with God becomes the turning point in the relationship. Not only is Moses instructed to carve another set of tablets, God also fulfils part of his request: God's presence will pass before Moses, and God will protect and shield him as Moses sees God's "back."

It is in this crisis and resolution that we gain insight into Sukkot: Moses has exposed his innermost being, and God responded by strengthening his chosen leader and solidifying the partnership. Too often, we put up barriers to protect ourselves. Moses did just the opposite by divulging his greatest fears.

Sukkot is the time of year when we come out from the security of the strong physical structures that are our dwellings and take a chance on the elements in flimsy shelters. Moses' example reminds us that there are other barriers we need to remove as well. The firmest foundations in our lives are not found in physical structures, but in the partnerships we establish with others. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the spiritual leader at Or Hadash Synagogue, Newmarket, Ont.

Howard Morrison

I will never forget the sukkah of my childhood outside of Boston. My parents, three siblings and I would put up our family sukkah in the backyard. Metal poles would be affixed. Then, the canvas walls would go up, followed by bamboo carpets of schach and branches of twigs.

Most years, rain would fall on the first night of yom tov, and we would finish the meal inside. On sunny afternoons, uninvited bees often joined us. When the festival concluded, I would beg my father to keep the sukkah up a little longer to use as a clubhouse with my friends.

One year, our family sukkah made the local newspaper. It was my first year away from home for my rabbinical studies in New York. A huge storm had pancaked my family's sukkah, and a picture showed it flat on the ground. Fortunately, nobody was inside. The age-old lessons of human vulnerability and fragility and our ultimate dependence on God were demonstrated in that photograph.

Now, over four decades later, I still observe the practice of sitting and dwelling in the sukkah, and I have created new memories for my own children over the past 20 years. When I enter the sukkah, however, I am taken back to my childhood and recall the memories of my parents. No wonder there is a kabbalistic practice called ushpizin, in which we invite seven heroic shepherds of Jewish history to join us in the sukkah.

Our memories should take us back to familial recollections, but also to the memories and values of Jewish history and tradition. I cannot think of a more memory-making experience than building a sukkah and celebrating Jewish life there with loved ones and friends. As we recall the years of our past and observe Jewish life in the present, we also plant seeds of Jewish historical memory for the future.

Wishing everyone Chag Samayach, a joyous festival of Sukkot. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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Actor tackles *To Kill a Mockingbird*

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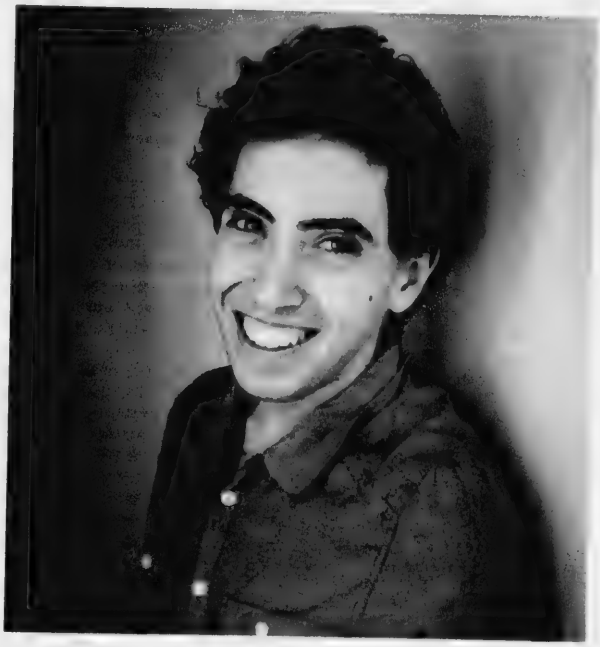

Tal Shulman,23, plays Dill in the play based on Harper Lee's novel.

It's just been a year since Tal Shulman graduated from Ryerson Theatre School, but in that time, he has made a name for himself within Toronto's acting community.

The Toronto-based actor tackles the role of Dill in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, based on Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, in the season opener of Young People's Theatre. It runs at the Mainstage until Nov. 2.

The film version garnered an Academy Award in 1962.

The play takes place in the fictional town of Maycomb, Ala. and is told through the perspective of Scout, a nine-year-old girl. "She tells a story of what happened to her the previous year," Shulman says.

"Things started to change in her town when a black man was accused of raping a white woman, and her dad was elected to be the lawyer to defend the black man. This was in 1935, at the time of great racism... the Jim Crow Law was in full effect. It is about her coming to terms with that and how her friends at school and the town reacts to this white man who has chosen to defend a black man in a case against a white family."

Shulman, 23, plays the 10-year-old Dill who is spending the summer at his Aunt Rachel's, who lives next door to Scout and her brother Jim. The three partake in little adventures mostly centred around neighbour Boo Radley, a recluse living on the same street. According to Shulman, pure childish curiosity makes Dill's major objective to be getting Boo Radley to come out of his house.

"Dill is intrigued by why this man stays inside," says Shulman. "As the play goes along, through a series of events, Dill comes to terms with the fact that maybe Boo Radley has chosen to stay inside."

Shulman wants audiences to take a moral from the story, of stepping into someone else's shoes, understanding where they are coming from, and to not be too quick to judge.

"Most of our audiences will be young and I think it is a really great lesson for children to learn from this story. It isn't always about them, and the way they see the world is different than how other people see the world."

> *Shulman wants audiences to take a moral from the story of stepping into someone else's shoes, and to not be too quick to judge*

Although it took place during the Depression, Shulman thinks the message still resonates today. "That sort of discrimination is something [with which] Jews are familiar. Jewish history is riddled with it," Shulman says.

"There is a famous case, the story of Leo Frank that is very similar to this...a Deep South pure racism. In reading the play I couldn't help drawing that parallel and realizing that this could happen to any minority, including the Jews. It is a great way for me to look into the shoes of the characters."

Joining Shulman on stage are actors Hume Baugh, Lisa Berry, Matthew G. Brown, Mark Crawford, Joan Gregson, Thomas Hauff, W. Joseph Matheson, Jessica Moss, Jeff Miller, Noah Spitzer, Caroline Toal, and Rudy Webb.

"I am the youngest person in the cast," says Shulman. "It has been such a joy to work under some real experienced actors and an amazing director, Allen MacInnis. At the beginning of my career to have the opportunity to play such a large role with such a great cast is such an honour."

Shulman's theatre credits include YTP workshops of *Risky Phil* by Paula Wing, *Bully for You* by Florence MacDonald and stage productions of *Handle with Care* and *The Chosen* for Teatron.

Shulman's passion is movies and he is now taking classes and auditioning to get his foot in the door to achieve his goal of acting on the big screen. ■

For tickets or more information on To Kill a Mockingbird *call 416-862-2222 or online at: youngpeoplestheatre.ca*

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2014

Adam Cohen: keeping Canadian Jews safe

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Adam Cohen became national director of community security for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) on July 1. As the Canadian Jewish community's top security specialist, it's his job to ensure schools, synagogues and other communal institutions remain safe.

According to CIJA, Cohen will focus on public events and holidays as well as routine security assessments and lockdown drills in Jewish schools, daycares, synagogues and other facilities.

Cohen, 38, brings 20 years of experience in security. Following three years in the Israel Defence Forces, he was an official in the Jerusalem District Court, where he led a team of 30 agents responsible for general security and personal protection for judges and their families, as well as lawyers and prisoners.

In Canada, he was the principal of a Montreal-based security consulting firm, specializing in system installations, the development and implementation of emergency protocols, and hands-on training for schools and places of worship.

In addition to his new role at CIJA, Cohen will continue as director of community security with Federation CJA in Montreal.

He recently met with representatives of day schools, synagogues and agencies, and visited a number of community institutions.

Cohen can be reached at security@cija.ca or toll free at 1-844-204-4343.

What are the most immediate threats Canadian Jewish institutions face? Are threats growing?

I don't see a growing threat. Of course, with everything happening in the Middle East this past summer, there have been more protests and people have more opportunities to be vocal about their opinions, from both sides. When everybody is so vocal and when we see what is happening in Europe, we tend to see a growing threat to our community. But there isn't. The threats I see right now are the same threats I saw before the Gaza conflict happened.

There are threats [involving] a lone individual just deciding in the moment to do anything from petty vandalism to throwing a rock at a school or synagogue. And then there are the other threats, the ones that our institutions face, such as an aggressive intruder entering a school or summer camp.

Are Jewish institutions adequately prepared in terms of security?

I can say that over the past 4-1/2 years, I have been very aggressive in preparing Montreal institutions, and since joining CIJA, I've been using the same approach to get the same level in the rest of Canada. On a side note, I recently made 18 site visits in three days. Schools are the highest priority. When I visit them, I look at what they can add, what they can tweak, and I re-educate staff about how to let people in, how to question individuals at the door, how to act if somebody is making threats over the phone. I also prepare synagogues for the High Holidays.

You mentioned your work in Montreal. What are some of those methods and will you export them to the rest of the country?

I'll start with the schools, which have always been my highest priority. Excuse me if I don't get into too many details, because there are some things I don't want any person with ill intent who will read this to know. But what I can say is how to deal with people who approach a school with aggressive intent, whether by phone or sending mail items or showing up at the school. It could be anything from an aggressive intruder to a parent who doesn't have visiting rights and tries by force to come in and take their kids. So there are all kinds of tools that we have installed in the schools, and there is a lot of training with the staff, a lot of training with the children, so they know as a second instinct what to do when an emergency occurs.

In August, 15 anti-Israel protesters gained access to the Montreal Federation CJA building, where they hung a banner reading, "Massacre à Gaza: CIJA is complicit." The intruders identified themselves as Jewish. Does that make a difference?

Not at all. I'll you something very funny. A day after that happened, they showed up again, because most of them are regulars. They come to the library, they come to Ometz, our family services agency. A lot of those guys came to the building regularly, before the incident and after it. So when they showed up that day, they were allowed in like any other person, and then they took a few banners out.

Security personnel immediately saw that there was no threat. We know all of them. So we just let them do their thing. We called a police car just as an extra measure of security, so there [would be] no friction or altercations between them and our staff or other visitors who have opposing opinions. A few minutes later, when they were done, everybody was smiling and they left the building. There was no security threat at all. Those are regular guests in the building.

Adam Cohen

> *There is a lot of training with the staff, a lot of training with the children, so they know as a second instinct what to do when an emergency occurs.*

But they did not cause enough of a disturbance that your eyes are peeled for them in the future?

No. When you see so many anti-Israel protests, this is nowhere near something like that. Some of them I know because I see them in some of the pro-Palestinian protests, and I respect their opinion. But nobody suspected for a second that these guys are a threat to anyone.

The federal government, through its Security Infrastructure Program (SIP), makes funding available to vulnerable communities to upgrade their security. Is the Jewish community making adequate use of that fund, and is it still available?

Yes, it is still available. Until a year and a half ago, the government used to go in batches. You could apply, and within two or three months, the deadline came, and the program closed. But as of a year and a half ago, the government decided to keep it open on a permanent basis so that anybody could go and apply. And yes, the community is making good use of it, and I must say the government program has been very accommodating to the risks our community faces.

How do you provide security without turning Jewish facilities into fortresses? How do you keep a sense of normalcy?

Two things: First of all – and I really mean it – we have an amazing relationship with the police. There's a lot of more being done behind the scenes. We get a lot of police presence when we need them, whether it's visible or not.

The second thing is educating the end-users, whether it's schools or synagogues. We educate them constantly about being extra vigilant. If they see something, [we encourage them] to report it. And we explain to them that we, as community security, we are not here to replace 911. If something happens, call 911, but then immediately inform us, because we can inform other institutions and tell them to heighten their preparedness level. We can learn from it, and we can also use this database of events to know if there's a trend, to see if we need to increase security in one way or another.

It may vary from place to place, but which security concern would you act on immediately?

This has nothing to do with us being a Jewish community but there is a growing trend of violence in schools – a teenager or outsider comes in and starts getting violent. For me, that's my No. 1 priority right now. My mandate is to serve the Jewish community and communal institutions, so I focus on Jewish schools. But this rise of violence in schools is, I think, something everybody in North America right now puts as the No. 1 priority. ■

'Subversive' stories?

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

The role of stories in the Talmud is misunderstood. It is common to hear the stories called "an interlude" or "an entertaining break," presumably from the "heavier" law (Halachah).

This position conveniently forgets that the same rabbis who composed the law also composed the stories. Our sages were sophisticated storytellers who understood that stories bear meaning. Mostly, the stories are illustrative: they give examples of issues of the law under discussion or explain nuances that expand on the Halachah.

In the article *At the Threshold of Forgiveness: A Study of Law and Narrative in the Talmud*, Moshe Halbertal of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem examines three pithy stories near the end of tractate Yoma. The issue concerns obtaining forgiveness of someone you have wronged before Yom Kippur. It is firmly established that God will not forgive unless the injured party has forgiven.

The stories demonstrate a profound principle: applying a law is complex and requires subtlety and wisdom.

The first story concerns Rav Jeremiah who in some way injured Rav Abba. Rav Jeremiah sits on Rav Abba's doorstep, the maid throws out the wastewater and some of it falls on him. Rav Abba, then, comes out and apologizes to the man who had formerly injured him!

The second story states that when someone injured Rav Zera, Zera would repeatedly pass before him and invite himself into his presence so that the injurer would come and appease him.

Finally there's the story of a butcher who injured Rav and did not seek forgiveness. The day before Yom Kippur, Rav goes to give the butcher an opportunity to apologize. A disciple asks where Rav is going. When Rav tells him, the disciple thinks to himself that Rav is going to be responsible for the butcher's death! In fact, Rav appears before the butcher who angrily dismisses him, and a bone from an animal he was cleaning shoots out and kills the butcher.

What were our sages trying to tell us with these stories? The first story shows the difficulty in applying the law. In sitting on the step outside Rav Abba's house, Rav Jeremiah may have been unsure of how to seek forgiveness. Then, an unforeseen event turns the tables and the injured party seeks the forgiveness. The story demonstrates the unpredictable nature of human events in spite of our efforts to establish laws for human conduct.

The second story constitutes a possible solution. It suggests that the injured party should discreetly give the injurer the opportunity to seek forgiveness. Of course, there is nothing legal or required here, but it sets up a model to be considered and perhaps emulated.

Finally, the third story demonstrates that, ultimately, affairs of the heart cannot be governed by law. As great as he was, Rav did not understand that the butcher would see his appearance before him on the eve of Yom Kippur as a provocation. The disciple did foresee this but did not dare tell his master. (The story begs the question: should he have tried?)

The three stories are important: the formulation of the law of forgiveness would be incomplete without them. They illustrate (1) the difficulty of seeking forgiveness, even in one who is remorseful; (2) one possible avenue to pursue in encouraging someone to apologize, and (3) the sensitivity and understanding of human nature required in encouraging an apology, so great that even a renowned sage may stumble.

Moshe Halbertal calls these stories "subversive," not because they undermine the law, but because they demonstrate its limitations. It is up to the individual to understand what is required and to act appropriately. This requires sound judgment, common sense, tact and sensitivity, none of which can be legislated. By adding these stories, the sages help us understand that Jewish law is ultimately a question of the head and the heart, reason and emotion. Far from an adornment, they are integral and indispensable. ■

Prof. Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus at University of Waterloo.

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בס"ד

In loving memory of
Stacey Louise Baer ע"ה
Cherished daughter
& beloved sister

You taught us that 'Hope' is essential to life, and through your courage and bright spirit, you will continue to ignite the role of this vital emotion, in all of us. The joyfulness and abundant love we shared, continues to fill our home and hearts, with your sweet presence, full of laughter and "forever memories".

Love, Mom, Dad and Jenn

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Fern Cohen	Sep 10/14	77 Dunfield Ave.
Gregory Gorbatski	Sep 12/14	10 Kingsbridge Cir.
Ethel Sapera	Sep 11/14	38 Avenue Road
Lily Leah Goodman	Sep 12/14	1555 Finch Ave. E.
Albert Lionel Geller	Sep 12/14	581 Avenue Road
Mira Weitzman	Sep 14/14	3560 Bathurst St.
Pnina Einav	Sep 14/14	385 Tyneview Lane
Marlene Drutz	Sep 14/14	225 Davisville Ave.
Eli Mizrahi	Sep 14/14	11 Espby Court
Rabbi Steven Saltzman	Sep 15/14	54 Laurelcrest Ave.
Blanche Zakkai	Sep 16/14	11 Townsgate Dr.
Edythe Blackstien	Sep 16/14	3800 Yonge St.
Molly Berliner	Sep 16/14	3560 Bathurst St.
Clara Fisher	Sep 15/14	203 Georgian Drive
Steve Khaner	Sep 17/14	280 Hidden Trial
Ruth Laker	Sep 18/14	3560 Bathurst St.
Sylvia Taube	Sep 19/14	10 Chiltern Hill Rd.
Valentina (Valerie) Gold	Sep 19/14	1 Clarke Ave. West
Doris Jacobson	Sep 19/14	3560 Bathurst St.
Wayne Langleben	Sep 19/14	7250 Yonge St.
Ida Kirshenblatt	Sep 22/14	110 Promenade Cir.
Jessie Cohen	Sep 20/14	1500 Steeles Ave., W.
Paula Delatycki	Sep 22/14	3560 Bathurst St.
Abe Morgenstern	Sep 22/14	765 Cummer Ave.
Florence Brill	Sep 23/14	425 Walmer Road
Helaine Cohen	Sep 25/14	5444 Yonge Street
Bob Burke	Sep 25/14	1101 Steeles Ave. W.
Goldie Rivers	Sep 23/14	2 Covington Ave.
Michel (Mike) Mayer	Sep 26/14	1 Clark Ave. West

HEBREW BASIC

Ralph David	Sep 18/14	3181 Bayview Ave.
Paulina Zilberbus	Sep 18/14	3560 Bathurst St.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Benguaich, Mimon	Sept. 11, 2014	106 Crown Heights Cr.
Itelman, Alla	Sept. 11, 2014	88 Promenade Circle
Epstein, Martin	Sept. 11, 2014	223 Torresdale Ave
Grinsaft, Arkadi	Sept. 12, 2014	19 Springhead Gardens
Nemchin, Lea	Sept. 13, 2014	125 Pugsley Ave
Shmit, Morris	Sept. 12, 2014	26 Tanbark Cres
Friedman, Gabriel	Sept. 12, 2014	120 Promenade Circle
Trachtenberg, Mildred	Sept. 15, 2014	190 King St
Krybus, Jack	Sept. 15, 2014	392 York Hill Blvd
Lipton, Murray	Sept. 15, 2014	2 Woodchester Crt
Wainer, Fani	Sept. 16, 2014	10 Trench St.
Birguer, Semen	Sept. 17, 2014	1463 Eglinton Ave W.
Doren, Rose	Sept. 17, 2014	569 Sheppard Ave W
Silver, Edith	Sept. 17, 2014	484 Steeles Ave W
Duke, Judith	Sept. 17, 2014	544 Atlas Ave
Tcherevatsky, Solomon	Sept. 19, 2014	523 Finch Ave W
Gord, Sylvia	Sept. 20, 2014	12 Fontainbleau Dr.
Barris, Gloria	Sept. 23, 2014	33 Harbour Sq.
Kreimerman, Peter	Sept. 27, 2014	5935 Bathurst St.
Kalnitsky, Pyotr	Sept. 25, 2014	81 Townsgate Dr
Teper, Lev	Sept. 28, 2014	100 Antibes Dr
Nichols, Annie Pearl	Sept. 28, 2014	45 Roslin Ave.
Fruitman, Ruth	Sept. 24, 2014	8888 202 St
Shore, Pearl	Sept. 28, 2014	1101 Steeles Ave W.

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
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AMICA helping seniors enjoy retirement

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

By the time a person is ready for a retirement home, their mobility is usually quite limited.

But there is one residence that has helped some of that mobility return.

Amica Mature Lifestyles, which has 18 locations in Ontario, has seen great improvement in its residents.

"A lot of folks move in with us when they're in their late 70's, 80's or even 90's," said Amica's Michael Hayward. "They've hit a stage where they can't quite do what they used to do.

"With us, they usually end up gaining quite a lot of flexibility, a lot of mobility, and they wind up feeling better," Hayward added. "That's because they participate in the wellness program and because they're eating balanced and nutritious meals.

"It makes a tremendous difference, especially at this stage of life," he said. "A number of our residents are getting to the point where they worry about falls, and falls by that age can result in some serious injuries.

A member of Amica's housekeeping staff

At Amica, there are readily available instructors, programs and facilities.

"It's important to [get exercise] all the way though your life, but it's hard to get exercise in a house or apartment, and going out to a gym is not an option for a lot of folks," Hayward said. "When you live in a community like ours, you have the opportunity, because it's right there on the main floor.

"Our wellness co-ordinators can even support ongoing programs between physio appointments," added Hayward, noting that while there aren't physiotherapists there, there are people who can follow and carry out a prescribed program for residents.

Amica has several properties in the Greater Toronto Area, including ones at Bayview and Sheppard avenues, Bathurst Street and Steeles Avenue, and Avenue Road and St. Clair Avenue.

"What we do is known as independent living," Hayward said. "We don't do long-term care or things you'd see in a nursing home.

"Our environment, which looks much more like an upscale condo or luxury hotel, is the kind of place you might think of as a rental apartment," Hayward added. "All meals are included though, and there's a dining room, a pub and a bistro, so there are plenty of food options."

"Folks typically will move to us after living in their home for a long time," Hayward said. "Maybe they don't want to cook or look after their house, and it is too expensive to pay people to look after things.

"Our community offers a chance to shed all of that stuff, so you can get on to enjoying retirement again."

Even though it's independent care, there are registered staff and directors of care available around the clock to the entire community.

"We have a higher staff-to-resident ratio than just about anybody would in the independent living category," Hayward said. ■

To find out more information about Amica Mature Lifestyles, you can visit www.amica.ca or call them at 416-408-0076.

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SPECIAL TO THE CJN

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Oaken Financial has been offering better rates on GICs and savings accounts without gimmicks to all Canadians.

"We, as a brand, have been focusing on the approach of 'no teaser rates or complicated promotions'," said Benjy Katchen, vice-president of deposits for Oaken Financial. "What we're finding is, in the Canadian financial services market, right now there are promotions that come in two veins."

One of those is the old 'sign up and get a free toaster' promotion, although these days the appliance has been replaced, often with an iPad or another tablet.

"But what's buried in the fine print is that the way you get the free item is by opening an account that will cost you $15 a month versus a lower-cost alternative, and you usually need to have it open for at least six months," Katchen said. "If you want to spend $90 in fees and close it after to get a free tablet, that's a way to do it, but it's a lot of work and pain for most people."

The other big promotion is giving a teaser rate for a new customer or only on money deposited within a certain period of time, and only if you specifically call the company and ask for that rate.

"What I hear time and time again with Canadians are complaints about those places and wondering why they only do this for the incoming customers," Katchen said.

"For us, we just put our best foot forward," Katchen added. "We treat our longtime customers just as well as our new ones and we try to do the best we can in terms of a savings rate for everyone."

Oaken Financial is able to give a better rate than some of the major competitors due to a number of factors.

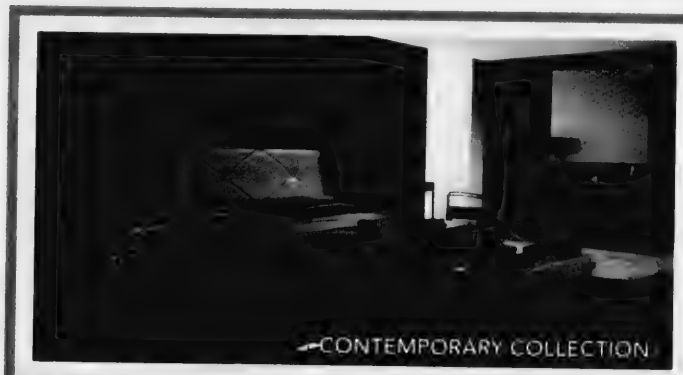
"Compared to the big five banks, we don't have the big overhead costs of a large branch network," Katchen said. "We do have locations, but it's more like one per city, rather than dozens and dozens of brick-and-mortar spots nationally that are expensive to maintain.

"We take that out and we give much better rates to the customer."

Another advantage for Oaken Financial, which has locations in Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and Halifax, is that there's no middleman.

"Oaken Financial is for Canadians who want to securely manage their savings independently," Katchen said. "Some people prefer to go through a broker or financial adviser to manage their savings, and financial institutions compensate them for that.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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Four Elms makes care a priority

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's the people that make the place. And at Four Elms Retirement Residence, it's those people who do their job to help and make it feel like home.

The living centre, located on Steeles Avenue West near Dufferin Street, takes pride in how they look after their residents.

"Outside of the luxury accommodations, we're known for the care that we give," said Four Elms marketing manager, Reesa Soto. "We've won several Governor-General Awards of Excellence.

"We offer three levels of care, depending on one's circumstances and what issues they're faced with," Soto said.

"We provide assisted living, assisted living on a secure floor that provides memory care, and we provide end-of-life care," Soto added. "We believe in aging in place."

Four Elms also offers some of the care options on an a la carte basis for those in the independent sector of their building.

"We have a full-time recreation manager and our focus is on fitness, wellness and entertainment," Soto said.

Enjoying a meal at Four Elms

Four Elms, which is operated by Diversicare, also uses Braingym, a brain stimulation enhancement program.

"Basically, [in the same way] that one works out and does body exercises, [they do that] with their mind," Soto said.

"Everyone that's here gets to benefit from it. You don't need to have a cognitive impairment to use it."

Along with long-term care, Four Elms is also set up to take in people for respite care, for periods as short as weeks at a time.

"We also do after-hospital stays," Soto said. "So say you've had a hip replacement and they're discharging you from the hospital, but you're not ready to go home.

"You could stay here for, say, two or three weeks and recuperate, because we have registered nursing staff in the building 24 hours a day."

The setup at Four Elms makes it look nothing like the drab, nursing home some people envision.

"I think, right off the bat, once they come in and see the environment and accommodations, it immediately takes away that whole myth of retirement residences being very institutionalized," Soto said. "You walk into a warm, vibrant building with luxury surroundings and amenities.

"We've got everything [including] a movie theatre, fitness centre, spa, library, private dining room, bar, bistro and cafe, so seeing all of these things takes away fear number one," Soto added. "Fear number two is that the food is going to be institutionalized.

"We have them come in for a meal and they see our executive chef who comes out of the dining room, and it's a fine dining experience."

> *You walk into a warm, vibrant building with luxury surroundings and amenities.*

Soto guides interested parties and their loved ones around Four Elms, learning more about them to better suit their needs.

"Basically, as a marketing manager, I need to know what brought them to us.

"Once I can better understand their situation, I can better assist them in how they should proceed and what kinds of services and care they need." ■

To learn more about Four Elms Retirement Residence, you can visit their website at fourelms.ca or call them at 905-738-0905.

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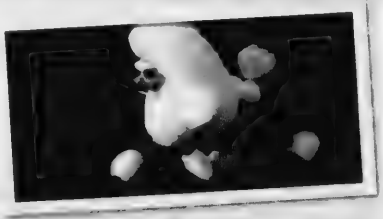

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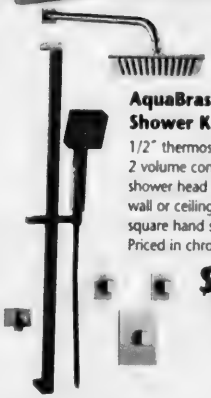

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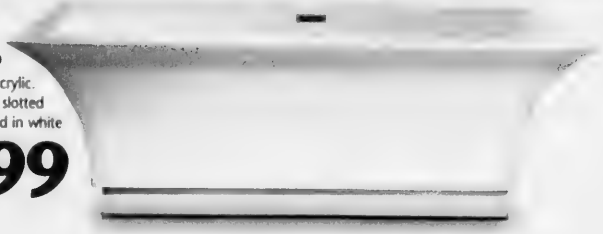

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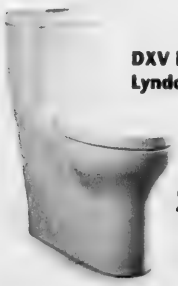

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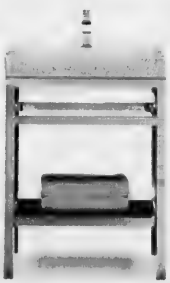

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The big move: preparing to downsize

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There comes a time when we all have to downsize, a moment many of us dread. Paring down can mean sorting through and discarding a lifetime's accumulation of possessions, furniture and memories, a potentially wrenching emotional process. So – no surprise – many of us procrastinate this task until the bitter end, when we're left with no choice but to get down to the nitty-gritty.

In times like these, conflict between parents and children can reach its zenith as stress levels rise. How to part with the massive dining room table that cost a fortune 40 years ago and that witnessed so many family meals, but that none of the kids even want? Saying goodbye to such possessions can be difficult and fraught with pragmatic challenges.

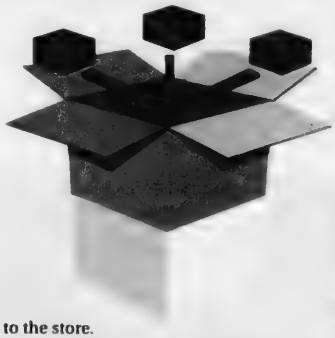
For some folks it makes sense to hire a consultant to aid in the process. Rosalind Tantalo, owner of Fresh Start Solutions in Toronto, is frequently called on for such services and finds her clients' possessions fall into three categories. "There's things they definitely want to keep, things they don't want to keep and the in-between items – which take a lot of guidance," she says.

Tantalo suggests beginning the process anywhere from two to six months ahead of a move, depending on the age of the family downsizing and the extent to which they're feeling overwhelmed.

Of the items no longer needed, she consigns some, donates others and suggests online auctions for large houses with multiple items to sell. Some 30 years ago it wasn't unusual for estate sales to take place on the front lawn of the downsizing family, where neighbours and friends could purchase items they want.

"Outdoor lawn auctions don't work anymore because what the average person has isn't interesting enough to draw a crowd of 100. But it is enough to draw people to an online auction," says an online auctioneer.

He said that representatives come to the homes of families wanting to sell 40 per cent or more of their household goods, and photograph and catalogue the items for sale, usually in lots. The auction is posted online where bidding takes place and money changes hands. After that new owners appear at the home to pick up their items.



"We make the process safe, and help owners capture the value of their items in fair market terms."

The beauty of the online auction is that it has the potential to sell 98.5 per cent of everything catalogued. The average fee is 30 per cent of the value of items sold.

However you choose to pare down and eliminate possessions you no longer need, be prepared to pay some fees. Tantalo suggests budgeting $3,000-to-$6,000 for consultant services, a fee that includes junk removal and the cost of movers to relocate items to consignment stores. ■

Top tips for downsizing

No doubt about it, downsizing is stressful. A large source of that stress stems from having to part with material possessions laden with emotional memory, items we perhaps may no longer use, but that contain financial or sentimental value. Still, when the deed has to be done, pragmatism is key. Here's our list of top tips for paring down,

Charitable Donations: You know that sofa you're trying to get rid of? Well, you'd be surprised how few charities are willing to pick it up, even though you're offering it for free. Charities have limited space and resources, so you'll need to research ahead of time to find out if they'll accept your donation(s), and if so, work out how and when you will get it to their facilities.

Care to Consign? Like charitable organizations, consignment stores can be very particular about what they'll take from you. In some high-end consignment stores you won't find anything digital. Furniture from big box stores is also unquestionably out.

"The majority of our clients are interior designers and they're looking for quality pieces they can repurpose with new finishes or fabrics," says a consignment store manager.

He suggests that sellers photograph the items they wish to consign and email the photographs to the store – unless they have an entire household of gently used items, in which it might make more sense for the consignment store owner to pay them a visit, and have the items delivered to the store.

Stores usually have a few preferred delivery providers but some clients insist on a cheaper option.

"One lady was consigning a beautiful white lacquer sideboard that we would have sold for $1,500," he recalls. She insisted on using a delivery company that was half the price of the one suggested by the store, and the sideboard wasn't wrapped or protected in any way. As a result, it was delivered with a large dent in the side. Now it's on the store floor with a $7 tag.

"Consignors seem to think that the value of an item should be close to what they paid for the item 10 years ago, and that's just not the case," he says. "Like a used car, home furnishings are categorized, for example, if you have a Mercedes it will hold value, but if it's a generic model like a Chevrolet, the sale price will reflect that."

Be Ruthless: Downsizing is about 'right sizing' for your lifestyle, which means you have to be ruthless when you go through your stuff. Make your decision on what to keep based on what you absolutely cannot live without. This means going through every cupboard, drawer and closet to find those hidden 'treasures' that you have likely forgotten or never used.

Pack Smart: Once you've determined what you're keeping, pack it in colour coded boxes so you know exactly which room it is destined for in your new place. Colour coding will ensure that the right boxes get into the right rooms from the start. There's nothing worse than looking for that essential household item, only to find it's buried in the back of a storage locker in the garage. ■ L.K.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"So we're providing that savings to consumers as well and that allows us to offer better rates."

It allows consumers looking for a safer option, such as seniors, to continue to have their money grow, even after their retirement savings plan is finished.

"As people get closer to retirement or retire, they tend to get more conservative in how they invest, and that's when GICs become more important," Katchen said. "Oaken Financial offers some of the best GIC rates and savings account rates in the country.

"When you stop working, whatever your nest egg is, it has to last forever," Katchen added. "At that point in time, you need some sort of fixed-term investment, and GICs and bonds are usually the best way to do that.

"You usually have to look somewhere like Oaken Financial to get the best rate."

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Benjy Katchen

"People want to make sure the money is there when they need it," Katchen said. "That allows us to assure Canadians that the money will be there when they want it and they'll have a great rate." ■

To learn more about Oaken Financial, you can visit oaken.com or call them at 1-855-OAKEN-22.

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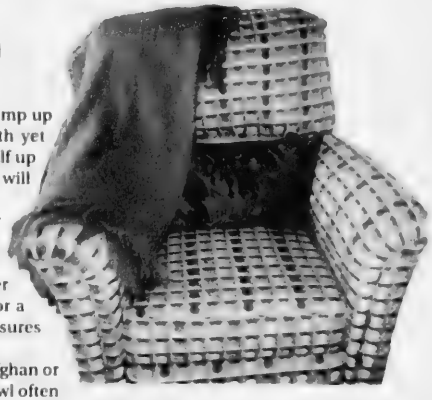
Warm up a chilly room with a throw blanket



ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If you haven't had a chance to ramp up the thermostat to keep up with yet another fall day, wrapping yourself up in the warmth of a throw blanket will quickly take the chill away.

Easy to throw around your shoulders, wrap around cold feet or cuddle with the kids, the throw blanket is aptly named. Smaller in size than a standard blanket for a twin bed, the classic throw measures approximately three by five feet.

With roots in Afghanistan, the afghan or throw was used as a wrap or a shawl often knitted or crocheted from the remnants of animals that were to be thrown away.

Today's throws come in a wide assortment of fabrics including cotton, chenille, fleece, wool, rayon, alpaca, fur and faux fur and all manner of polyester. Cashmere offers the most luxurious feel providing warmth and a light touch. Bamboo fibre throws, soft and durable, are welcomed by the environmentally conscious.

Not only utilitarian, a throw will spruce up the look of an old comfortable recliner or make a dated bedspread or duvet pop. Generally well-priced, a throw allows the homeowner to add some character or whimsy to a tired room without breaking the bank. Decorative touches are often added such as fringes, oversized buttons, interesting trim or other embellishments. A themed throw blanket serves as a reminder of a favoured vacation spot or an artist's rendering.

Lightweight and extremely portable, a throw is perfect to use on the back patio on a chilly fall night, kept in the trunk of a car for an impromptu picnic or as a wrap in the stands at the soccer field.

A throw is compact enough to fit into your hand luggage for the volatile temperatures on planes or trains. You can add a personal touch by designing your own throw from the many websites catering to personalized items. Create your own pattern or add the family monogram for a signature look. Tartan, animal print or plain, a throw adds certain panache to finish off the look of a room.

Designers have gotten into the act with everyone from Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan alongside Missoni, Chanel and Gucci amongst others boasting throws as part of their home fashion offerings. The selection of throws available at big box stores or high end designer boutiques is seemingly never ending as designers continue to add to their existing collections. Price points vary but the selection available in the marketplace will work with any budget. ■

A throw provides warmth, and works as a fashion-forward accent on an old recliner, sofa or duvet. ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN PHOTOS

Stay connected

NEWS CANADA

Last year's ice storm put many out-of-town relatives of Toronto seniors on edge.

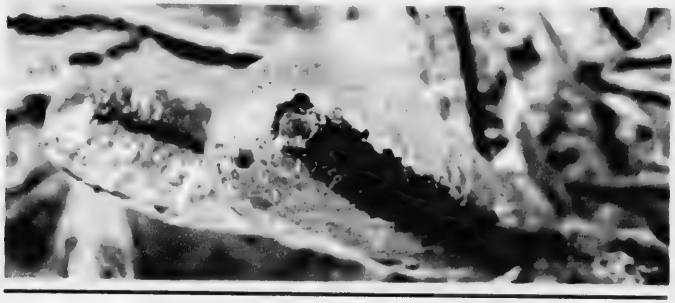
Images and news reports of power outages and extreme weather added to the worry factor for those whose only information was what was seen in the media. Not knowing about the health and safety of their loved ones, or how to find local community resources, added a level of concern for family and friends who watched the ice storm from a distance.

This year, however, a new online site lets out-of-town family members provide this type of help and support. Offered by the Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre, the site, www.TorontoCentralHealthline.ca, is a one-stop-shop which gives specific information about services that seniors may require in times of need.

"Worrying about elderly loved ones who are separated by distance is a concern for many of us," says Julia Oosterman, the director of communications and stakeholder relations at Toronto Central CCAC. "Being able to log on to a single, comprehensive portal will put our loved ones' minds at ease."

The site provides local information that can be searched by entering a postal code, or by location. As well, users can request specific, targeted data by narrowing their search from 20 kilometres down to three kilometres and even find services within a one kilometre radius. The website also links to the Caregiver Exchange which focuses on services that support caregiving across Ontario. This feature helps out-of-town family members put caregiving support in place for their loved ones as well. More information is available at www.healthcareathome.ca. ■

www.newscanada.com



Act now to save money on home heating

NEWS CANADA

Make sure your home is winter-ready now that the deep freeze is just around the corner. By weatherproofing, for example, every homeowner can prevent heat from escaping through leaky doors and windows, all of which will manage energy use and reduce electricity bills. Take a look at these helpful quick tips from Hydro One:

Fill the gaps. Check the trim on windows for openings between the frame and your house. As much as 13 per cent of your home's heat loss could be escaping through the gaps. If possible, stuff insulation between the window and frame or try caulking around the window.

On sunny winter days, trap warm air inside by opening window coverings to let the warmth of the sun in. Once the sun goes down, close the coverings to keep the warmth in. Think of your curtains as insulation for your windows.

Another inexpensive option is to build a barrier against cold by sealing your windows with indoor plastic sheeting just for the winter. All you need is a hair dryer, double sided tape, and some inexpensive plastic sheeting.

If your doors aren't properly fitted, air is leaking outside. Rubber weather stripping can be an easy way to seal the door by creating a skirt on the door frame.

If you have a fireplace that you never use, consider getting it sealed as warm air is sucked out if the damper is open. If you do enjoy sitting by the fireplace, make sure you turn down your main thermostat. Fires can actually draw heat from the room up the chimney so your furnace has to work even harder. ■

More tips are available at www.HydroOne.com/SaveEnergy.
www.newscanada.com

TO CONDO... OR NOT TO CONDO?

Baby Boomers are on the move.

By Sam Chaim

Most Baby Boomers, if asked are likely to say they are not thinking of a condo when it comes to their next home. With the condo building boom that has struck Toronto, its suburbs and many other major cities in Canada one would think that the choice has never been better. That is only true if you are OK going from a detached, 4 bedroom home of 2500 square feet (or more), to a 2 bedroom plus den, all nicely packed into less than 1000 feet. But are you?

There are other condo choices, in 20-30 old buildings where 1000-1500 is more the norm. Older units are more affordable but we have seen them rapidly appreciate as the demand has increased for what once seemed like borderline "old people's" apartments. And, they will require significant improvement to make them feel like the "castles" boomers are selling.

In various surveys on the topic of condos, people are saying they prefer the maintenance-free lifestyle, proximity to shops and restaurants and easier commute times. Boomers are the last generation to adapt to the growing trend for high rise living. A poll by Leger Marketing conducted last year found that, even among Boomers who are considering a downsizing move, most said they would not consider a condo any time soon.

Like to travel? Just lock the door and let security know you are away. Tired of home maintenance? Condo living will take care of that for you as well. Aside from the odd call when the oven doesn't work or you accidently flushed something you shouldn't have, condos do offer a simpler lifestyle.

But, there is a cost, those condo maintenance fees which most people seem to automatically dislike. However, just think for a moment where that money goes and compare that to what drives your current home expenses. Condos have automatic savings accounts to pay for major expenses. It's called a *reserve fund* and it covers major repairs and replacement of significant items such as the roof, driveway, elevators and the structure to name a few. Condo corporations must anticipate their needs and set aside the funds in advance to deal with long term issues. Condo fees therefore include small contributions every month from every unit owner. They don't have the luxury of putting it on a credit card. Homeowners meanwhile pay for these items as they need them.

Renting is of course another option, but there are factors that makes this choice difficult or undesirable all together. Boomers are entering the fixed income phase as they head into retirement, or perhaps are already there. While renting offers some cash flow benefit, rental buildings with suites of the size and luxury amenities boomers are looking for are scarce. Interest rates are low thereby limiting the cash flow available to fund ongoing rent. While you will have the capital from the sale of your home to fund the rent long term, your capital and your estate will deplete. So maybe a bungalow? Well, demand for a freehold single story option has pushed those homes to unexpected new highs as well.

Possibly the most significant cost of holding onto that freehold home might be the ease, convenience and security of just locking the door and saying .... "see you in April".

This is a challenging decision and definitely calls for some expert input from a team of professionals including a real estate agent, financial advisor/accountant or estate planner. Don't leave home without them.

Sam Chaim is a Toronto and Thornhill area registered real estate salesperson and SRES, certified Boomer real estate specialist, with RE/MAX Realtron Realty Inc.

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LASH

VIVA provides top-notch amenities

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's as fresh and new as they come in Thornhill.

VIVA Thornhill Woods is the newest retirement community in Vaughan and has plenty to offer its residents.

"We've been open for just over a year now and we offer a fantastic location, being across from the [Schwartz/Reisman] Jewish Community Centre," said VIVA's Danny Joseph.

"We are also close to the Mackenzie Health Centre and close to dining and shopping, so we really do have a lot to offer."

Although it only opened in 2013, VIVA has plenty of experience, and ensures that all current staff are more than up to par.

"We have brought over a lot of members from other locations to help train people in our programming. We believe in sharing best practices across our communities."

Part of those thought processes include providing top-notch care to residents.

"VIVA [offers] the all-inclusive lifestyle built on exceptional customer service," Joseph said. "We do our best to ensure that our staff gives that exceptional service to all community members."

Dining room at VIVA Thornhill Woods

VIVA Thornhill Woods offers both independent and assisted-care living.

"The independent suites are for folks who are still quite mobile and perhaps require a bit of assistance now and then, and we do offer a la carte support services," Joseph said.

"The assisted living floor is for those who have less mobility and require a little more assistance. In addition, we offer a full range of lifestyle programming."

There are plenty of elite amenities and various services that VIVA Thornhill Woods can offer.

"Everything from a fully equipped spa with a saltwater pool, and a studio for adults [to stretch and exercise,] which is a great place to spend time and focus on being proactively healthy," Joseph said. "We also have a big-screen movie theatre, which is basically a cinema."

But one of the best things about VIVA Thornhill Woods, according to Joseph, is the food.

"I think the cornerstone of what we offer is our VIVAlicious dining program," he said. "That includes three meals a day made by our executive chef, who is Red Seal [certified].

"He uses ingredients that are freshly picked from our organic garden, which is on-site. We are quite proud of it."

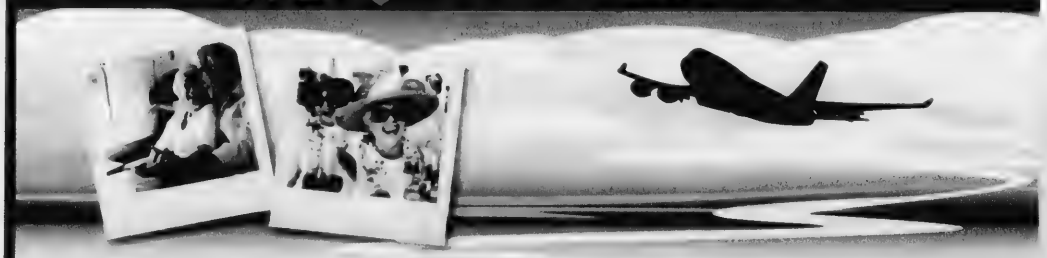
With all of the luxuries available, Joseph is confident that anyone who is looking for a retirement residence will be more than happy at VIVA Thornhill Woods.

"We believe that we're offering incredible value for the size of the suites and we really encourage people to come out and see it for themselves," Joseph said. "They're welcome to come by any time to test drive our community and perhaps stay for lunch or dinner.

"We're confident that after a couple of hours here, they'll realize that this is a special place for them." ■

You can get more information about VIVA Thornhill Woods by visiting their website at www.vivalife.ca or by phoning them at 905-417-8585.

WE ❤ SNOWBIRDS!



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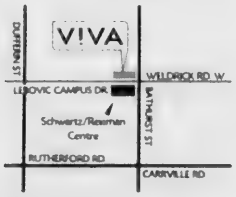

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Protecting your 'baby' at Auto Vault Canada

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

You know that luxury car you have sitting under a tarp in your driveway – the one you can't part with but can only drive in good weather? Maybe it's time to move it underground.

That was the premise for Auto Vault Canada when the company launched in Toronto in fall 2004. Today, company founder, Gary Shapiro stores up to 400 cars from October each year in a 110,000-square-foot underground facility at Highway 7 and Leslie Street.

For many of his clients who own luxury, seasonal vehicles or cars they have inherited but don't have space or time for, the decision to store cars at Auto Vault Canada boils down to peace of mind. The facilities have sophisticated, monitored security systems, closed circuit cameras and on-site, roaming security guards to offer round-the-clock protection. Moreover, they know their cars will not suffer the kind of wear and tear they might experience in a home garage filled with bikes and kids' outdoor gear, or on the curb where they are exposed to weather, scratches and dents.

"Most of our business is storage, but we also keep the cars fully detailed for those that want it," Shapiro says. Monthly costs range from $250 to $320 according to the level of service, which can include driving the cars in an indoor circuit to keep their batteries charged.

That's extremely cost effective, Shapiro says, especially when you take into account potential insurance reductions that can offset the cost of the storage fee. "We offer tremendous value for money, and many parking facilities that provide only a fraction of our security features and value-added services charge parking fees often higher than ours."

A love of cars prompted Shapiro to start the business. A 22-year veteran of the fashion industry, he needed a storage facility for his own cars and rationalized that if he needed it, other like-minded individuals would need it too. "The city was growing and I knew parking would become an issue," he recalls. "I wanted to do something I enjoyed and that I believe in, and this has turned out to be an extremely successful venture."

Shapiro's 'customer-first' philosophy may be part of his success at Auto Vault Canada. He fields each and every call from his clients, no matter where he is or what the time of day. "I want that connection with my clientele, because it's all about service," he says. "That's why my phone is always on. And I try to always over-deliver on a promise, because if you give people fabulous service at a fair price, I believe they'll drive a path to your door."

Auto Vault Canada launched in Toronto this fall.

Shapiro is putting the finishing touches on a second location in the Yonge-Eglinton area which will offer the same level of security protection. While cars constitute the majority of his storage, he can also accommodate watercraft, jet skis, motorbikes, snowmobiles, boats and trailers. Other services available include custom-made car covers, rim repair and custom rim painting, dent removal, valet delivery and pickup and full car detailing. ■

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Canterbury - a big step forward

DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Canterbury Place in North York is a retirement residence for seniors, which allows them the privacy of independent living along with the services necessary to live comfortably.

"People feel like they're not in an old folks home or a nursing home. They feel like this is a good step after they've lived in their houses," says Maureen Gold, sales and marketing manager of Canterbury Place.

The 17-story residence is similar to condo-living – except with even less maintenance.

"We make their lives stress-free. We do all the cooking, the cleaning – we take away all the things of daily living that made them stressed when they had their own homes or their own condos," says Gold.

The suites are also specifically designed for seniors, which means features such as easy access showers and an emergency response system.

Adding to the feel of city living, the building is easily accessible from the Yonge subway line. All the major amenities of condominiums are included, such as a gym and underground parking with the addition of an Internet café, a hair salon and a spa.

Enjoying a meal at Canterbury Place.

Although a major concern of seniors is that an all-inclusive retirement residence is out of their budget, Gold says that, "out of all our competition we have the lowest rates because we're new. Our rates are between $3,000 to $5,000 a month."

And that is including meals, housekeeping, fitness classes, recreation and some laundry, among other services.

Other services are on a pay-as-needed basis.

"Somebody moves in today and they're perfectly great, and tomorrow they fall and break their arm. They need us to help with the bathing on Wednesdays and Fridays every week," Gold says. "We will help them with bathing Wednesdays and Fridays, and they just pay for the bathing. And when they're better and can bathe on their own they stop paying for it."

Included however, is a supportive staff who will do things like call the cable company to negotiate a cable bill – an immeasurable plus as anyone who has had the displeasure of dealing with customer service knows.

There are plenty of activities to keep residents occupied, with at least four activities a day. These include movie nights, Internet classes, card games and excursions to apple picking farms. Being so social might even lead to a romance – as it did for one lucky couple who met at Canterbury and are now married.

Canterbury opened just two years ago and is at about 70 per cent occupancy. The 155 units range from 300 to 850 square feet. ■

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Seniors, caregivers lives intertwined

JEFFREY F. BARKEN
JNS.org

Janet Tauro (right), a foreign worker from Mumbai, is the caretaker for Varda Kahanovich (left), a 90-year-old Israeli woman living on Kibbutz Maagan Michael.

Janet Tauro and Varda Kahanovich made a deal upon which their lives depend. Tauro, a foreign worker from Mumbai, provides Kahanovich, a 90-year-old Israeli woman living on Kibbutz Maagan Michael, warm and devoted care. In return, Kahanovich hopes to live a long and happy life, with Tauro as caregiver.

For Tauro and the 60,000 other foreign workers currently employed as caregivers in Israeli households, the stakes are high. Work visas are patient dependent and are granted for four years and three months, with no extensions or opportunities for reassignment in the event of the elder person's death. Following the patient's death, a caretaker must return to his or her country of origin, terminating a source of income that has provided countless opportunities for their families.

The situation of Tauro and Kahanovich is a familiar one in the Jewish state.

"Today, the foreign caregiver that lives with the patient – this is the most common way to grow old in Israel," Yaron Bengera, vice-president of Yad Beyad, a Tel Aviv-based agency that recruits foreign workers, tells *JNS.org*. "In the past, patients would be taken care of by their family, but this is changing fast."

Yad Beyad helps Israeli families find the right caregiver to suit their specific needs. The agency also supports foreign workers, providing information about their rights and cultural resources, and counselling them to ensure their success as caretakers. In the case of Tauro and Kahanovich, a perfect match was made.

"I was astonished to see such a beautiful girl. She is my friend," Edna Oren tells *JNS.org*, recounting the day that Tauro first arrived at Maagan Michael to take care of her twin sister. In this case the culture shock was minimal, since Tauro had previous experience working in another Israeli home and she had even learned Hebrew.

"We are so lucky," Oren says. "There are not many people like Janet. She has two brains, not one, and she has four hands. She even learned to sing *Hatikvah*."

Tauro says she works as a caretaker but also works "from my heart." In her first job as a caretaker, she looked up Israeli songs on YouTube, singing and dancing with the woman she served. She even learned her patient's style of cooking.

"My motive is to make her [Kahanovich] feel like she is living in her own house and can make her own decisions," says Tauro.

The system is not without faults. Many foreign workers suffer emotional distress, having been separated from their children and families abroad. Likewise, difficult work environments have, on occasion, resulted in abuse.

"You're always dependent on your employer for your quality of life," Nora Lender, Kibbutz Maagan Michael's administration manager for the elderly welfare, tells *JNS.org*.

Israel may not be perfectly adapted to support a foreign work force, but a significant effort has been made to inform workers of their rights, regulate payment, and provide a genuine welcome. By law, workers are entitled to a base salary of 4,300 NIS ($1,235) per month, out of which employers can make deductions accounting for the live-in caretaker's room and board. Contracts also stipulate that caretakers receive nine paid holidays based on their own country's calendar, and 150-per cent pay on weekends.

It is not a competitive salary from a western perspective, yet it "can be life-changing for families in the third world," Bengera explains.

According to Kavlaoved.org, a website and hotline providing an overview of foreign workers' experiences in Israel, nearly 80 per cent of foreign caregivers in Israel are female.

"We prefer to bring female caretakers with families to Israel because they need the income and are better motivated," Bengera says.

Life's circumstances led Tauro to the conclusion that seeking work abroad was the best way to provide for her children, and she is committed to the course she chose, no matter the hardship.

"Everything I earn is for my kids' education, I believe in education," Tauro says.

Critics lament that for talented workers like Tauro, there is no path to Israeli citizenship and no exceptions to the patient-dependent contracts of four years and three months. Israel is throwing away valuable expertise whenever veteran workers are deported, they say.

Bengera suggests that the contracts exist partially as a practical protection against worker burnout, but believes there should not be a limit on the number of years a worker can stay in Israel.

"I think the [Israeli] government should recognize that these workers are a part of the fabric and culture and I think it should be possible for families to visit," he says.

Tauro echoes those sentiments when she explains her sympathy and involvement with the Jewish people whom she has met and served in Israel.

"After being in Israel this long, I am a part of the pain and the joy," she says regarding her experience caring for Holocaust survivors and observing Israeli memorial days for fallen soldiers. "I salute the country." ■

CHARTWELL Constantia holds Jewish values

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's an opportunity to take the next step in living, without leaving the shtetl.

Chartwell Constantia Retirement Residence sits in the heart of the Jewish community in Thornhill, located on Centre Street by New Westminster Drive.

And as the location would suggest, its population and lifestyle is geared towards its predominantly Jewish clientele.

"They observe Jewish holidays, different customs and traditions," said Danielle Scheinman, corporate communications manager for Chartwell. "It caters to the local Jewish community and provides residents with the care and support they need, but also gives them the Jewish customs and traditions they likely desire.

"There's a rich cultural heritage there."

Constantia is one of over 170 Chartwell properties across Canada, including a handful in the Greater Toronto Area.

"It's considered independent supported living," Scheinman said. "It's for residents who are still independent, but need additional care and support.

"That includes on-site personal care services with staff available 24 hours a day, as well as medication administration and assistance, so it's your typical retirement independent supported living home."

But the residence in Thornhill has chosen to go the extra mile based on its demographic.

"What does make it special is that it's 99 per cent catered to the Jewish surrounding population," Scheinman said.

"There's an on-site library with access to Jewish literature, and there are Shabbat services held weekly by a nearby rabbi."

The food isn't kosher, but it's made in a way that's familiar for the Jewish residents.

"There are High Holiday services and traditional food is served, and they observe all of the holiday celebrations," Scheinman said. "It really just embraces and celebrates Judaism, and tries to be an extension of what the residents would have known before moving into a retirement home."

Scheinman believes that the "Jewish" retirement home, which is still relatively new, was a natural progression based on where it is located.

"It's able to become the Jewish retirement home in Thornhill, and I think that's very important for them to feel like, when they're moving from their family home into a retirement home, that they're not leaving all of their traditions and customs they've grown up with," Scheinman said. "Their Jewish values and heritage are still there."

Carrying those things with them has helped many of the residents in Constantia make some new friends, too.

"It creates a bond there, when 99 per cent of the residents are Jewish," Scheinman said. "It's a small Jewish world.

A suite at CHARTWELL CONSTANTIA

"It's created a great market in the Thornhill area."

Constantia offers a la carte services to its residents, along with a few general facilities for everybody.

"We have regular observation and supervision, gentle exercise, and our 'Live Now' program, which incorporates physical, mental and emotional activities," Scheinman said. "We keep our residents active."

There is plenty to do at a Chartwell residence, which works against the historical notion of a nursing home.

"That stigma has been around for a very long time, and I think that comes from an old-world view of nursing homes," Scheinman said. "Nowadays, they look different, they feel different, and you don't just go into one of these homes and feel like you've lost your independence.

"There are activities, outings, celebrations, cultural events, seminars that are held, and so much more to do in a retirement home."

Scheinman has seen families take a look and be pleasantly surprised with what is there.

"When they come in and do a tour with us, they're immediately attracted to the people, and that's what makes a home what it is," Scheinman said. "It's a warm and welcoming place to be, with lots of happy faces and tons of things to do.

"When people visit these homes, they're immediately surprised that there's still life in these residences."

For more information on Chartwell Constantia or any of the available properties, you can visit their website at chartwell.com or call them at 1-855-461-0685. ■

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Where is the Diaspora headed?

David Bezmozgis and Arnold Eisen discuss the future of Judaism outside Israel. **PAGE 12**

Shul leans on teen Torah reader

Rebecca Bahar, 17, is the ba'alat korah at Beth Radom Congregation. **PAGE 22**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:08 p.m.	7:09 p.m.
Montreal	5:47 p.m.	6:48 p.m.
Toronto	6:02 p.m.	7:13 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:15 p.m.	7:20 p.m.
Calgary	6:21 p.m.	7:27 p.m.
Vancouver	6:00 p.m.	7:04 p.m.

ONE IN SEVEN CANADIAN JEWS LIVES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

What are we doing about it?

PAGES 6, 8, 21, 37

Jamaican Jews aren't giving up

Island's dwindling 200-member community struggles to preserve its heritage. **PAGE 29**

The day the music died

The story of Shlomo Carlebach's final hours on earth. **PAGE 55**

The many talents of Sara Teitel

Poet, painter and singer does it all on her new album. **PAGE 42**

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LeBron helps Blatt start off right, and jihadi flags found in Israel

Religion protects teens, study says

Religious Jewish teens are far less likely to attempt suicide than their secular Jewish counterparts, a new study says. The study, led by researchers from Tel Aviv University's Sackler School of Medicine and Clalit Health Service's Geha Mental Health Center, and published in the journal *European Psychology*, bolsters previous research that faith may offer some protection against suicide. Researchers interviewed 620 Jewish-Israelis aged 14 to 17 and asked them to define their degree of religiosity as "secular," "observant" or "ultra-Orthodox." They found the most religious were 45 per cent less likely to exhibit suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

Cavs rout Maccabi TA in exhibition

The Cleveland Cavaliers walloped Maccabi Tel Aviv in a game that pitted the Cavs' new coach, David Blatt, against his former squad and marked LeBron James' return to his hometown team. It was the NBA coaching debut for Blatt, who won the Euroleague title with Maccabi TA last season. The exhibition game had been scheduled long before Blatt became the Cavs' coach in June. James scored 12 points in playing only the first half of the 107-80 victory. It was his first game back with the Cavs after four seasons and two NBA championships with the Miami Heat. Blatt held a news conference in Hebrew for the more than one dozen credentialed Israeli reporters after the game. In other Israeli-NBA hoops action, Maccabi Haifa will play the Raptors in Toronto on Oct. 22.

David Blatt

LeBron James

Is ISIS in the Holy Land?

Gardeners found a bag of 25 ISIS flags Oct. 7 in an industrial area of the northern Israeli city in Nazareth Illit. The possession of materials from the jihadist group has been outlawed in Israel. "When something like this is discovered in the heart of a Jewish city, it needs to light up many warning signs," Nazareth Illit Mayor Alex Gadalkin said. Last month, an Arab-Israeli from Kfar Kana suspected of being linked to the group was arrested, while another went to Syria to train with ISIS there. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

100

The age of former American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee CEO Ralph Goldman when he died Oct. 7 in Jerusalem.

1,900

The age in years of an ancient mikvah uncovered near Beit Shemesh, Israel, during a highway expansion project.

Quotable

"

There is no re-escalation of anti-Semitism, despite Russian propaganda that the new government in Kiev is neo-Nazi.

— Andrew Bennett, ambassador to the Office of Religious Freedom, on Ukraine. See p. 54

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz discusses the Shabbos Project.

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Letters to the Editor

What rent assistance means

I never thought I would be in this situation. Growing up in a Jewish stable, middle-class home, money was never a concern. I attended university and got married in my early 20s. A few years later, I had a child and was divorced soon after.

I have worked diligently my entire adult life. Saving money as a single parent, however, was impossible. In my 50s, I stopped working due to mental health, anxiety and depression issues. At that point, I had no savings and I needed outside assistance.

The monthly rental assistance from the Kehilla Residential Programme has made a huge impact on my life. The extra money means I no longer have to agonize over which necessities to buy. It's difficult to go shopping and choose between food, toiletries and paper products. I am constantly calculating the difference between buying bulk paper towels or toilet paper on sale, versus just one small package of one or the other.

Help with rent means I can make healthier eating choices and buy a whole chicken to cook instead of cheap cold cuts. I can actually go out with friends and family for lunch or a movie. Before, I would turn down these invitations, never admitting it was due to lack of funds.

Before receiving this assistance, I was constantly worried about my finances. I finally feel like I can breathe.

Name withheld on request
Toronto

Remembering Transnistria

Oct. 9, 1941, was when the cattle trains filled with many thousands of Jewish deportees from Romania took off to what was geographically the largest killing field in the Holocaust: Transnistria.

Since the border between Romania and Ukraine was the Dniester River, that piece of land was called Transnistria, meaning across the Dniester. The name Transnistria was coined by the Fascist government of Romania and became the destination and grave for about 500,000 Romanian Jews, Ukrainian Jews, Roma, Christian clergy accused of plotting against the fascist government, mentally and physically handicapped people, homosexuals, and other "undesirables."

The name Transnistria existed only between the fall of 1941 and the spring of 1944. That name was never on any pre- or post-World War II map.

May the survivors and the memory of those whose deaths were caused by the Romanian soldiers and Ukrainian collaborators be a sacred remembrance for all of us.

Holocaust Education Week starts this year on Nov. 2. On Nov. 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, there will be an evening specially dedicated to the tragedy in Transnistria. Please come and let us remember that the name was Transnistria.

Felicia Carmelly, president, Toronto Transnistria Survivors' Association
Toronto

Redeeming Jacobson

The article about Nathan Jacobson ("Jacobson exonerated in U.S. of money laundering charges," Oct. 2) is another case of the U.S. "prosecutocracy" running amok.

Somebody kept feeding Canadian media hints about Jacobson as an "international fugitive" who was "on the lam" and a "flight risk" just to put more stress on him. There was also the deliberate "perp-walk" staged for the benefit of Canadian news cameras at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

As usual, when confronted by somebody who is willing to defend himself, most or all of the charges vanish instead of going on to trial.

Jacobson has been deprived of a considerable fortune, as well as more than a year of his time, his dignity and the respect he had in the community. At least we can give the last back to him.

John Thompson
Toronto

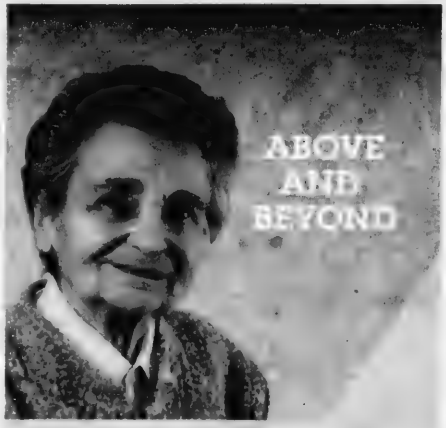
On rabbis talking to rabbis

In the new feature column Rabbi2Rabbi, *The CJN* presents conversations between two rabbis discussing Judaism's take on various issues. On many occasions, one of them is Orthodox, the other non-Orthodox.

Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, the acknowledged leader of modern Orthodoxy, was against Orthodox rabbis engaging in religious dialogue with non-Orthodox rabbis because of the unbridgeable divide in Torah Weltanschauung between them.

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*



When my husband died suddenly, my whole world stopped. I didn't even know where to begin with the arrangements. It was 2am. I called Benjamin's. To my surprise, Michael Benjamin himself answered the phone. They took care of every imaginable detail. They even had umbrellas for guests when it rained at the gravesite. I will never forget their wonderful care.

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Torah has what you need

Many people crave Jewish wisdom, but don't know how to access it. If only they realized that what they're seeking can be found in our tradition.

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: In 1919, theologian and philosopher Franz Rosenzweig delivered a speech at the founding of the Free Jewish House of Learning in Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Rosenzweig foresaw how the intellectual blessings of the Emancipation would shatter the old way of sacred study.

He said: "A new 'learning' is about to be born – rather it has been born. It is a learning in reverse order. A learning that no longer starts from the Torah and leads into life, but the other way 'round: from life, from a world that knows nothing of the law, or pretends to know nothing, back to the Torah. That is the sign of the time." Rosenzweig doesn't seem to judge this new way as "better." He simply accepts the new reality.

Rabbi Fishman: Wow. What a provocative text you've chosen! It immediately reminds me of an almost identical statement made by someone on the opposite end of the religious spectrum: the chassidic Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin.

Famed as a master of the mystical tradition, he trail-blazed a new methodology of "Radical Torah."

"God created a book," he said, "and that book is the world, and the commentary on this book is the Torah."

I believe both Rosenzweig and Rabbi Tzadok are both saying that our lives are real, and if the Torah is going to "fit" into our reality, then it has to be at least as real as our lives.

Rabbi Splansky: Rosenzweig continued: "There is no one today who is not alienated or who does not contain within himself some small fraction of alienation. All of us to whom Judaism, to whom being a Jew, has again become the pivot of our lives… we all know that in being Jews we must not give up anything, not renounce anything, but lead everything back to Judaism. From the periphery back to the centre, from the outside in."

I believe there are many people today who crave Jewish wisdom – to guide them in their work, their family lives, the ethics of daily living – but they don't know how to access it.

Even with all the online resources, even with more Jewish books in print than ever before, even with all the Torah classes offered in Jewish communities across Canada (not to mention in universities), many strongly identified Jews feel they cannot access Torah. Why do you think that is?

Rabbi Fishman: I think modern society has succeeded in throwing the baby out with the bath water. Many people are disillusioned with organized religion and/or are unwilling to participate in a setting outside their comfort zone.

Torah classes are a perfect example. So few people attend, and that's a great tragedy, because they might just offer exactly what so many people are searching for. Perhaps people don't realize the wisdom they crave is contained within our tradition.

Rabbi Splansky: Back to Rosenzweig: "Seen from the periphery, the centre does not appear invariably the same. In fact, the centre of the circle looks different from each point of the periphery. There are many paths that lead from the outside in. Nevertheless, the inside is oneness and harmony. Only the outset, only the point of departure, will be different for everyone."

This is what makes Torah study today so interesting. As a rabbi, I can (and must!) bring centuries of commentaries to the table. My study partners on Shabbat mornings include men and women, professors of literature, physicians, economists, newcomers to Canada, Israelis, Holocaust survivors, musicians, lawyers, etc. Each one brings a different set of eyes to the text. The "point of departure" is indeed different for each of us, but very often the place we reach is "oneness." None of us can achieve that alone.

Rabbi Fishman: There is a certain rose-coloured perspective that sees the centre as oneness and harmony. I would like to suggest that each person brings individual uniqueness to how they see, study and understand Torah. Each person's conclusions may be radically different from the next. This, too, is Torah!

If we can approach texts with openness, then the disagreements for the sake of Heaven are also beloved. Torah allows us all to find our own uniqueness, it promotes our vibrant individuality, and that's why I cherish it. ■

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From the Archives | Simchat Torah

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

A presenter blows a shofar and greets the crowd at a Simchat Torah rally held Oct. 2, 1977, at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto.

SeeJN | Decorating the sukkah

MIRIAM ALSTER/FLASH90 PHOTO

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin welcomes children to decorate his sukkah at the president's residence in Jerusalem on Oct. 7.

From Yoni's Desk

From trauma to triumph

Two weeks ago in *The CJN*, we featured a personal essay by a woman named Ilana. She moved out of her family home at the age of 15, and after that her life descended into poverty. She lived in dank basements, turned to drugs and alcohol and endured a severe assault. She survived on less than $100 a month and contemplated suicide. "My life was a chaotic mess of overdoses, assaults, stitches and abusive relationships," Ilana wrote.

Last week's *CJN* included the story of Miriam, who has long suffered from health problems that made it near-impossible to find employment. She made a conscious decision to live in the Jewish community so her son could grow up with Jewish friends, but it came with a price. As her health deteriorated and the bills kept piling up, Miriam felt defeated. "I was depressed, alone and many times I thought I wouldn't make it," she wrote.

In this week's *CJN*, Rachel, a single mother, relates her own story. She gave up a promising teaching career to care for her son, who suffers from a rare condition. "The fall from [a] stable life full of hope to the one I live in poverty happened so quickly," she explains.

These stories serve as a reminder that poverty is a serious issue in our community. According to recent data, just under 52,000 Jewish Canadians live in poverty. Of those, more than 9,700 are children. And as Sheri Shefa reports this week, the problem is getting worse. Between 1981 and 2001, the poverty rate in the Jewish community hovered around 13.5 per cent. Now, it stands at 14.6 per cent, slightly lower than the national average of 14.8 per cent. In Toronto, the Jewish poverty rate rose from 10.9 per cent in 2001 to 12.9 per cent in 2011.

Children, the disabled and single parents are among the most vulnerable. So are the elderly, many of them Holocaust survivors. The situation in Montreal, where the Jewish poverty rate is the highest in the country at 20 per cent, is indicative of the financial challenges facing the older generation.

The good news is the Jewish community is full of individuals and institutions dedicated to eradicating poverty. The three essays in our "From Trauma to Triumph" series illustrate a commitment to improving the lives of our most vulnerable. Each story could have had a far more tragic ending were it not for the Jewish community's help.

Ilana, Miriam and Rachel (all of whom wrote under pseudonyms) have benefited from the Kehilla Residential Programme, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's housing agency, which offers rental assistance to those in need. These days, Ilana lives in a safe community and is back in university pursuing a master's degree. Miriam is taking care of her health problems and enjoying some of life's smaller pleasures, like wearing clothes that actually fit her. And Rachel is able to devote her time to taking care of her son without worrying about how she'll pay for his medical expenses.

These three women have been given new leases on life thanks to the Jewish community. But, as the statistics indicate, there's much more work to be done. ■ — YONI

REFLECTIONS

A tradition maintained in secrecy for centuries

Ruth Miller

Maria and I were taking our usual tea break at my kitchen table. The year was 1995. Maria had been coming to me for 10 years, to help me keep my house clean and livable.

She and her husband came to Canada in the 1950s from Portugal by way of France. They, like many Portuguese people, were fleeing Antonio Salazar's dictatorship.

Over tea, the conversation turned to her life in France. Maria's English was not good. Haltingly, she described her apartment and the town she lived in. And then she said, "My landlord in France was very mean. He was a Jewish man."

Did she really say that? It took me a moment to find my voice.

"Maria," I said, "do you know that we are Jewish?" She looked embarrassed and confused.

"Being mean and being Jewish don't necessarily go together," I said. "Some Jews are mean. Some Christians are mean. It has nothing to do with your religion."

As I rose from the table to clear our tea things, I said, "Maria, did you know that there are Portuguese and Spanish people today who are descended from Jews, who light candles every Friday night and have no idea why they do it. Only that it's part of their family's tradition."

"I light candles Friday nights," Maria said.

I stopped. "You do?"

"Yes," she said. "And I say a prayer."

"You do?" I said again.

"Yes," she said, and holding her arms out at eye level, she made a gathering motion with her hands as she said, "I ask God to bring peace into my heart."

Ruth Miller

> *Here in my kitchen was a 64-year-old Catholic woman, making the same motions an observant Jewish woman makes over the Shabbat candles as she says the blessing.*

I was stunned. Here in my kitchen was a 64-year-old Catholic woman from Portugal, making the same motions an observant Jewish woman makes over her Shabbat candles as she says the blessing. I realized that Maria must have come from a Converso family that had been performing a Jewish ritual for 500 years, generation after generation, not really understanding why, but faithfully doing it every Friday night.

"Maria," I said, "You know that you are descended from Jews and your lighting candles on Friday night tells me that."

I'm not sure Maria was as excited about this as I was, or that she appreciated the irony of the situation, that her remark about her landlord led us to this revelation.

I knew it would be difficult to explain the history of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and that in order to avoid expulsion many Jews converted to Catholicism.

So I didn't try to explain but asked, "Did other people in your village light candles on Friday night?"

"I don't know," she replied. "It was something we did in the family.

"We didn't talk about it with anyone else."

A good friend of mine had written a book on the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. I had gone with her to Spain in 1992 while she researched her book. When I told her about my conversation with Maria she was as amazed as I was. She put me in touch with a filmmaker, who, as it happened, was making a film about Conversos around the world.

He asked me if Maria would be willing to let him film her lighting the candles and then film her worshipping in her Catholic church.

Maria said she was willing and a date was set for the filming.

It was a bright autumn day. The film crew, Maria's daughter, a friend of mine who spoke Portuguese, and I, gathered at Maria's modest house in Toronto.

Maria's candles were oil, like those from ancient times. She took her place at the dining room table. When she said her prayer over the candles she did not make the traditional motion of arms and hands that I had seen her do at my kitchen table. Perhaps the presence of a film crew inhibited her. I was disappointed and I could see that the filmmaker was disappointed too.

The next stop was the Catholic Church down the street where Maria prayed in front of the Virgin Mary and lit some votive candles. Lighting candles in church, lighting candles at home on Friday night, both meaningful acts of devotion to this faithful Catholic woman descended from Jews.

As we waited in the darkened church, I asked Maria's daughter, recently married to a "Canadian" as she put it, if she lit candles on Friday night. "The first Friday we were married, I did," she said. "My husband came home after work, saw the candles and asked, 'Who died?' I never lit them again."

Just like that, 500 years of tradition ended. I am not a religious Jew, but I felt a deep sadness at hearing this casual statement signifying the end of something wondrous. In the darkened church, I was glad Maria's daughter couldn't see that sadness on my face. ■

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MARTIN DANIEL INTERIORS

Jewish poverty increasing in Canada

Numbers suggest Montreal, with a large aging community, has been hardest hit

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The poverty rate among Canadian Jews is increasing, according to the Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA's 2011 National Household Survey, and social service providers across the country are weighing in on the issue.

"For the first time in two decades, Jewish poverty in Toronto is on the rise," said Nancy Singer, executive director of the Kehilla Residential Programme, a non-profit housing agency in Toronto.

The survey reported that the Jewish poverty rate is climbing across the country. There are 57,195 Jews living below the poverty line, which translates to 14.6 per cent of Canada's Jews, compared to 14.8 per cent among the wider Canadian population. In 2001, the Jewish poverty rate was 13.6 per cent.

Montreal has the highest rate of Jewish poverty of Canada's major cities, at 20 per cent, while Ottawa has the lowest rate of 8.9 per cent. Vancouver sits at 16.1 per cent, Toronto at 12.9 and Calgary at 10.8.

Robin Gofine, vice-president of strategic community planning and engagement at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said the statistics on poverty highlighted in the survey are "sobering."

"Poverty in the Jewish community is an issue that affects more than one in 10, certainly in Toronto, and it is imperative that poverty be atop the communal agenda," Gofine said.

"It is not just people with low socio-economic standing, but people who are suffering from mental and physical illness, people with disabilities, new immigrants, seniors, Holocaust survivors, and single parents," she said.

More than 24,000 Jewish people in the GTA live under the poverty line, said Fran Chodak, a Jewish Family and Child (JF&CS) social worker and co-ordinator of the agency's STEP – Striving to End Poverty – project.

"We also know that the line is somewhat arbitrary and that there are a whole lot of people who struggle financially, even though they may not be defined as poor, among the working poor."

Nancy Singer, executive director of Toronto's Kehilla Residential Programme

Referring to the increased number of Jewish people in the GTA living under the poverty line, Singer noted that "the cost of living in Toronto has certainly escalated. Rents have certainly gone up and the stock of affordable housing has not. People are struggling... and these are hard working people who can't make ends meet, who have two jobs."

The numbers suggest that Montreal's Jewish community has been hit the hardest.

"In 2001, 18.6 per cent of the population was considered living in poverty, and now we've reached 20 per cent," said Leah Berger, senior planning associate for Federation CJA in the department of strategic planning and community relations.

"What we're observing in Quebec is that there is a progressive offloading of services from the government onto community organizations, on to families and individuals. Services and programs that were initially provided by the government are no longer being provided and there is still a need for these. So in response, communities, families and individuals are having to offer responses without necessarily the financial means to do so," Berger said.

"We know government-mandated health care premiums have increased over the last few years, while services have been reduced. Transportation costs have increased. The price of a bus pass increases almost annually over the past 10 years. Finding a subsidized spot in a daycare is another challenge, particularly for single-parent families. The cost of rent has increased."

Susan Karpman, director of community services and immigration at Ometz, an employment and social service provider in Montreal, said the reason why Montreal's Jewish community has the highest poverty rate in the country is due in large part to the city's aging community.

Seniors make up 20.4 per cent of Montreal's Jewish community, compared to 16.9 per cent in Canada's Jewish population as a whole.

"We also have significant numbers of large families with lots of children in the observant community, and that also tilts the balance, because that community has its own challenges in terms of supporting the larger and growing communities."

In Vancouver, the most recent statistic indicate that 16 per cent of Jews there live below the poverty line, an increase of about two percentage points since 2001, said Susana Cogan, housing development director at Tikva Housing Society, a non-profit agency that works to provide affordable housing for working-age Jewish low-income adults and families.

Cogan also attributed Vancouver's growing poverty rate to an "increase in [the number of] seniors and the difficulty for people to get full-time positions.

"Vancouver has the most expensive housing – rental and ownership – costs of the whole of Canada. Yes, there is an affordability problem that affects everyone, including members of the Jewish community," Cogan said.

Mark Zarecki, a Montreal native who serves as the executive director of Jewish Family Services of Ottawa, said the poor in Ottawa used to be more diverse when immigration rates were higher, but the demographics in Ottawa have changed dramatically.

"The elderly community is much larger than it was 10 years ago, and the youth community, from ages zero to 14, has shrunk by 500 kids. It is an aging community," he said.

Chodak, of JF&CS in Toronto, said poverty numbers are rising in the Jewish community for the same reasons they're going up in the general community.

"The systemic issues that everyone faces in the community, Jewish people face, too. So whether there is a great deal of youth unemployment, we know that newcomers face poverty. We know single parents, when there is a family breakdown, we see single women raising children facing poverty. There are a lot more elderly living in poverty, and there are a great deal of people who are precariously employed," Chodak said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

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Causes of terrorism deeply rooted in Mideast

Paul Michaels

Much has been written in the past few months about the necessity to counter, militarily, the threat that the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, and other jihadist groups pose to the Middle East and beyond. Less attention has been devoted to addressing economic and educational structural factors plaguing the Middle East, which allow fanatical groups to recruit a steady stream of disaffected youth to their ranks.

It was therefore significant that in his Sept. 24 speech to the UN General Assembly, U.S. President Barack Obama said: "We must take concrete steps to address the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics and the trends that fuel their recruitment… In the Middle East and North Africa… a quarter of young people have no job, food and water could grow scarce, corruption is rampant, and sectarian conflicts have become increasingly hard to contain.

"If young people live in places where the only option is between the dictates of a state or the lure of an extremist underground – no counter-terrorism strategy can succeed. But where a genuine civil society is allowed to flourish – where people can express their views, and organize peacefully for a better life – then you dramatically expand the alternatives to terror."

No wonder Obama spoke of the struggle against fanaticism being "generational," one that, no matter what assistance the West provides, can be addressed only by Middle East countries themselves.

Unfortunately, prospects for adopting the requisite structural reforms in the broader region appear dismal. Population growth continues to far outstrip economic measures and job prospects, especially for the critical "youth bulge."

Back in 2002, the UN-sponsored Arab Human Development Report, written by Arab scholars, examined why the Arab world lagged so significantly, relative to international development standards.

Last month in *Politico* magazine, Hisham Melhem, the Washington bureau chief of *Al-Arabiya*, wrote an unusually blunt critique of the failure of the Arab world to address this disorder. Under the title, *The Barbarians within Our Gates*, Melhem spoke with despair of the "chaos of an entire civilization that has broken down:

"Arab civilization, such as we knew it, is all but gone. The Arab world today is more violent, unstable, fragmented and driven by extremism – the extremism of the rulers and those in opposition – than at any time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire a century ago.

"With the dubious exception of the antiquated monarchies and emirates of the Gulf – which for the moment are holding out against the tide of chaos – and possibly Tunisia, there is no recognizable legitimacy left in the Arab world," Melhem noted.

Sadly, even those Gulf states are anything but bastions of enlightenment. Qatar has supported the Islamic State and Hamas; Saudi Arabia, now part of the anti-Islamic State coalition, has, for years, underwritten Wahhabi fundamentalist madrassas throughout the region – including in Pakistan – inspiring a generation of youth prone to extreme intolerance, even to fanaticism.

"No one paradigm or one theory can explain what went wrong in the Arab world in the last century," Melhem claims. Arab nationalism in its various forms, Arab socialism, the rentier state and rapacious monopolies, various Islamist movements – they have all failed, "leaving in their wake a string of broken societies."

Melhem concludes bleakly: "As terrorist organizations, Al Qaeda and Islamic State are different from the Muslim Brotherhood, a conservative movement that renounced violence years ago, although it did dabble with violence in the past. Nonetheless, most of these groups do belong to the same family tree – and all of them stem from the Arabs' civilizational ills. The Islamic State, like Al Qaeda, is the tumorous creation of an ailing Arab body politic. Its roots run deep in the badlands of a tormented Arab world that seems to be slouching aimlessly through the darkness. It took the Arabs decades and generations to reach this nadir. It will take us a long time to recover – it certainly won't happen in my lifetime." ■

Remembering Hannah

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Were she alive today, you might see her walking on the street, perhaps in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. She would likely walk with the aid of a cane, and if she were with a friend or child, or grandchild, she would hold on firmly but tenderly to her companion's elbow. Despite the vigour of her youth and the erect dancer's posture that identified her distinctive silhouette against the blue and gold Mediterranean shoreline of Kibbutz Sdot Yam where she lived for a while as a young woman, her gait today would be slow and her back slightly sloped from the weariness of 93 years. But her widely set, large dark eyes might still shine. And her smile would still suggest her warm, caring, positive nature.

But she is not alive today. Alas.

Hanna Senesh was murdered 70 years ago on Nov. 7, 1944. She was only 23 years old, charged with espionage, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed in Budapest by a kangaroo court of Arrow Cross Nazi sympathizers.

Most Israeli schoolchildren know Hannah's story. The details of her life and – it must be said – of her death too, are taught in the curriculum dealing with the Shoah. She is regarded as a national hero. Outside Israel, however, fewer Jewish children are familiar with her name.

Thus, it is important on the eve of the 70th anniversary of her death that we say her name, recall that she once existed and teach some of the remarkably powerful lessons she imparted to the world during her short life.

In 1939, Hannah left her native Hungary after finishing high school, and moved to Mandatory Palestine to study at a girl's agricultural school in Nahalal. She came alone; her mother and brother remained in Budapest. After Nahalal, Hannah moved to Sdot Yam.

In 1943, the 22-year-old agricultural specialist joined the clandestine fighting forces of the as-yet-to-be-born Jewish state. She volunteered to parachute behind Nazi lines in Europe to help rescue fellow Jews. In March of 1944, she and several other Jewish Palestinian volunteers were dropped into Yugoslavia. Three months later, in June, she crossed into Hungary and was captured almost immediately. Hannah was sent to prison in Budapest, tortured, and ultimately shot by a German firing squad on the cold, bleak, snowy morning of Nov. 7. Despite the cruelty and depravity of her torturers, young Hannah did not disclose the information they sought from her.

But it is not for her courage alone that Hannah Senesh is recalled and celebrated.

Hannah was a writer and poet long before she came to Palestine. She wrote until near the end of her short life. Indeed, the poem that is perhaps most identified with her - *Blessed is the Match* – was written in Yugoslavia in 1944. It is a compact, incisive meditation on the possibilities for inspiration that arise from human action.

"Blessed is the match consumed while kindling flame.

Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.

Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake.

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame."

Were she alive today, it would indeed be a great privilege to stroll with Hannah Senesh. In a sense, however, we can stroll with her and perhaps even hold on to her elbow when we read her poems.

"There are stars whose radiance is visible on earth though they have long been extinct," Hannah once wrote. "There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world even though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind."

Hannah never imagined, when she spoke those words, that they would one day apply to her. Her words remind us over and over again that each of us stumbles less in the dark because of individuals – some perhaps in their 90s, some perhaps younger, some perhaps no longer alive – who provided light along the way in our lives. ■

Dishonest dealings nullify the mitzvah

Rabbi Jay Kelman

I write these words on Erev Yom Kippur when thoughts of repentance, reconciliation and forgiveness are uppermost in our minds. The mundane money issues we deal with on a daily basis seem almost trivial as we spend the day in prayer and reflection.

But it is the mundane that Judaism seeks to sanctify. The term for commercial dealings, *maasah umatan*, literally means to lift up and give. It is through our integrity in our business dealings that we are uplifted. When we conduct ourselves with honesty, we are not only lifting ourselves up, we are giving to others. We should conduct ourselves in a way that can create a win-win situation, one that can be uplifting and inclusive. Our sages note that almost all of us sin in some way or form in our monetary dealings and "confession" of such sins plays a major role in our recital of the *Al Chet*.

The process of tshuvah consists of regret, acknowledgment of our wrongdoing and resolve to do better in the future. Interestingly, the acknowledgement of our sins, the *Vidui*, is derived by our sages from the Torah portion dealing with a case of theft where the Torah tells us that in addition to returning the stolen goods, we must admit our wrongdoing and confess our sin.

Even more telling is that the Torah is dealing with theft from a convert. The basis of tshuvah is directly linked to the way we treat converts in our midst. This should come as no surprise. In the Torah, the term *ger* is used to identify both a stranger and a convert. And no mitzvah is emphasized more in the Torah than being kind to the *ger*, mentioned at least 36 different times in the Torah.

After the serious yet joyous High Holiday period, a short few days later we celebrate Sukkot – when you are actually reading this column. The reinvigorated relationship with God and our fellow man that marks this period is brought to full expression during Sukkot. It is the time to celebrate with "our sons, our daughters, our servants, the levite, the *ger*, the orphan and the widow who are in our midst." There is no joy unless the convert and stranger (and many others) are central to our celebrations.

Here, too, at Sukkot monetary concerns are front and centre. Judaism has long taught that the ends do not justify the means. Behind this principle stands not only justice, but also a core principle of Jewish faith. Man can control only the amount of effort exerted. Results are up to God alone. All God demands from us is that we try our best. This was the reason our sages equated farming with faith. A farmer may give everything he has to ensure a maximum yield. But if nature, or shall we say God, does not co-operate, all of one's efforts are pretty much worthless.

The moral futility of misplaced effort in using improper means is expressed in the principle of *mitzvah habah b'aveirah*, a mitzvah made possible through sin. The improper means strips any ensuing "mitzvah" of any value. The classic talmudic case used to illustrate this concept is of that of a stolen lulav, which must not be used to fulfil the mitzvah.

Sukkot is *Zman Simchateinu*, the time of joy when Jews from all walks of life come together in celebration. Our rabbis understood the four species of the lulav as representing four different types of Jews – from the most pious and learned to the totally unlettered and unobservant. Yet, only when all are joined together can there be true celebration. To steal a lulav is to destroy the unity of the Jewish People. And for what? To save a few dollars. Why not use your friend's lulav or that of the community?

As we settle into the New Year, may we use our material blessings as a means to greater sanctity. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

On compromising

Norma Baumel Joseph

Recently, Anat Hoffman, leader of Women of the Wall, told *The CJN* she is propelling her organization forward by "compromising" with state authorities in Israel on their application to allow women to pray at the Kotel, the Western Wall.

I call her plan a sell-out.

A compromise must include certain features. We begin with a conflict: two sides, or more, claiming rights to a certain element. But in order to proceed with settling the dispute, all sides must have evidentiary claims to that element. If strangers suddenly walked into your house one day and claimed it as theirs, would a compromise be appropriate? I think not. If there is no evidence supporting their claim of ownership, they would be potential thieves. We cannot compromise when there is no substantive title involved.

Some might proclaim that Israel "walked" into the West Bank and claimed territory not rightfully its own. Others will claim both historical and existing property rights to the land. Perhaps in this case we can consider talk of a compromise, even though the issues are so complex and long term that no easy compromise or split is available. And yet, we should acknowledge that there are claims on both sides that demand response. How to affect a compromise is unclear, but something must be worked out. It cannot be all or nothing.

In a proper compromise, both sides must receive some benefit and both must also eventually accept conditions that are less than their original goals. Striking a responsible balance does not mean getting matching halves. It does not mean that both sides are equally correct.

It takes a wise leader to guide the parties through to a deal that enables both sides to make concessions while accepting the final outcome. The longer the dispute lasts, the harder it is to find a solution. The more complex the issue, the more difficult it will be to find a happy medium.

The give and take of compromising requires a great deal of patience, understanding and fairness.

Israel and her leaders are in need of those qualities. All of us need them.

As I have written before, when it comes to Women of the Wall, the proposal to allow women's prayer at Robinson's Arch, at the southern end of the Wall, does not qualify as a compromise in any way. In accepting Robinson's Arch as the place to pray, Hoffman is relinquishing Jewish women's rights to pray as a group at the Kotel.

Women of the Wall originally engaged the Israeli government in court in order to pray at the Kotel as a group of women, with Torah and tallit. The Kotel, that remnant of the retaining wall surrounding our ancient Temple, is sacred territory, made so by its history and by the thousands of Jews – women and men – who have prayed there over centuries. The issue was never about allowing women to pray as a group somewhere.

When seeking compromises, we need to be sure what the primary issues are. Women praying at the Kotel is the issue. Court cases were won on this issue. From 1989 until 2003, Women of the Wall argued in the Supreme Court of Israel for that right. In 2003, we were vindicated, as the justices pronounced in our favour. The state was ordered to find a way to allow us to pray as is our custom at the Kotel. That decision was again confirmed in a major decision at the district court level in 2013, which stated that everything we seek is legal and in the "custom of the place." How can anyone give that away?

A compromise may involve negotiating access to that place – by all parties. But a compromise cannot remove Women of the Wall from the women's section. That is not a balanced deal in which both sides get some recognizable benefit.

Robinson's Arch is a sell-out. Praying at the Kotel is our legacy and no one has the right to compromise that away. ■

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Division, fixation on past threaten Jewish future: panelists

JODIE SHUPAC
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Jewish life in North America won't survive if it continues to be mired in the past and fixated on the Holocaust and denominational divisions.

This was the key message delivered by Toronto author David Bezmozgis and Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) chancellor Arnold Eisen in a engrossing and at times provocative discussion hosted by Beth Tzedec Congregation Oct. 6.

"Where Do You Think You Are? A Dialogue About the Future of Jewish Life in the Diaspora" drew close to 200 people to the synagogue's banquet hall and was moderated by Holy Blossom Temple's Rabbi Yael Splansky.

Beth Tzedec's Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl introduced the speakers, each of whom emphasized a somewhat different approach to reinvigorating Diaspora Judaism for future generation.

Bezmozgis, the acclaimed, Latvian-born novelist and filmmaker whose latest book, *The Betrayers*, has been shortlisted for this year's Scotiabank Giller Prize, proposed Hebrew language and literacy training as a way to draw young North American Jews to Jewish and Israeli culture.

Eisen, an American writer and one of the world's foremost authorities on American Judaism, spoke of finding ways to better communicate across generations and denominational lines.

"Anyone touring [former centres of Jewish life in Europe] will mostly see a lot of cemeteries. This type of shtetl-based, Yiddish-language Judaism is, for all intents and purposes, gone," Bezmozgis said, adding that the future lies with the Hebrew language.

"We should be teaching Hebrew even to Jews who aren't religious… to hear the culture, go to the land, listen to the music. If I was in charge of North American Jewry, I'd say, 'Here's a bunch of money, let's put it toward teaching [young Jews] Hebrew.' I would give less to Holocaust education, which I don't think is the priority now, and less money to Israel. We in North American need it more than they do, I think."

While Israel has clearly functioned as a refuge for historically persecuted Jews, Bezmozgis said, predominantly secular Jewish life in North America can't be sustained if it continues to focus on the Holocaust as a medium for self-perpetuation.

"I don't believe in God, but Judaism has rich traditions and culture that have survived for thousands of years, and I would hate for those to disappear," he said, adding later, "[our continuation] also hinges on Israel. If it becomes a theocratic state [dominated by the religious right], we'll probably lose a lot of young North American Jews."

Eisen agreed that Diaspora Jewry needs to change tack and openly acknowledged the challenges it faces, but he spoke more optimistically than Bezmozgis about North American Jewry's ability to sustain itself.

"Modern Jewish life is kind of an experiment," he said. "We're trying to live in two civilizations at once – we want to have a thick Jewish life, but also to be part of the larger, secular culture… Will we make it? I think we will be able to, though maybe not in as large numbers [as before]."

He added: "We've just got to find a way to give thickness to a Jewish life that's still in touch with religion but not [necessarily] be bogged down with this intense [Orthodoxy] that many Jews don't want to associate with."

Rabbi Yael Splansky, left, moderated a talk on the future of Diaspora Jewry with author David Bezmozgis, centre, and Jewish Theological Seminary chancellor Arnold Eisen. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

He said Jews need to get better at talking to each other despite differences in religious affiliation. As well, though he doesn't advocate for a purely secular Jewish culture, he believes cultural or secular Judaism is important for Jewish continuity.

"We can't afford to the let the haredim go off into a ghetto," he declared. "I second [Bezmozgis'] notion that we have to figure out a model that appeals to *all* Jews. Let's find Sabbath activities that aren't strictly religious… If I were [head of a Jewish] federation, I'd put the money there."

Both speakers cited some of the findings in last year's Pew Research Center report on American Jewry, such as increased assimilation and rates of intermarriage, and discussed ways to counter these challenges.

Bezmozgis also called for North American Jewry to attract young Jews by looking at Israel "warts and all," as is done in Israel itself.

Both Bezmozgis and Eisen agreed that factors such as anti-Semitism and exclusion have historically kept Jews together, and that the unprecedented privilege of North American Jews and their ability to "blend in" has made the Jewish community less cohesive.

"But we can't depend on a spike in anti-Semitism to make Jews Jewish again," Eisen said.

During a question period, the speakers diverged on the issue of how 20-somethings can be rallied to Judaism.

Eisen called for young Jews to be drawn in through social ethics and environmentalism. "I think Jews have more to offer the world when it comes to ethics of creation than a lot of others."

Bezmozgis responded: "I think it's somewhat offensive to say there is a uniquely Jewish province of ethics. If you want to rally young Jews to Judaism, do what any other culture does: use language, music, food, culture… There's so much for Jews to be proud of. Let's find those things." ■

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2014 GUEST SPEAKERS

RETIRED COLONEL RICHARD KEMP CBE
Israel, Gaza, Morality and a Complicit Press
October 27, 2014 | 7:30 PM
Eglinton Grand Theatre,
400 Eglinton Avenue West
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CAROLYN GLICK
Author of The Israeli Solution: A One State Plan for Peace in the Middle East
November 11, 2014 | 7:30 PM
Beth Sholom Synagogue
Generously sponsored by Senator Linda Frum & Howard Sokolowski.

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI
The Future of Peace in the Middle East, The Future of Judaism in the State of Israel, From Brooklyn to Jerusalem: A Second-Generation Journey
November 28 & 29, 2014
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2015 LOOKING AHEAD

BRET STEPHENS
Pulitzer Prize winner, American Journalist, former editor-in-chief Jerusalem Post, foreign affairs columnist Wall Street Journal
March 11, 2015 | 7:30 PM
Beth Sholom Synagogue
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DANIEL GORDIS
Commentator and Scholar, one of Israel's most thoughtful observers and one of today's most respected analysts
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Toronto entrepreneurs give Israelis a leg up with 'venture philanthropy'

Next Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund members stay connected to the charities they donated to in 2012

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

When a group of Canadian young professionals travelled to Israel in 2012 and donated almost $150,000 to three Israeli charities, their commitment to support Israeli non-profits didn't end there.

This past summer, two Ethiopian Israelis from Tech Career – an organization that helps train Ethiopian immigrants to work in the high-tech industry – spent a month interning at a Toronto-based software developing company, thanks to the effort and resources of the Next Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund (JVPF).

Jeff Kimel, 27, who works in real estate at Westdale Properties, and co-chaired the Next Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund along with Daniel Sliwin and Zack Belzberg, explained that this initiative was inspired by his involvement with a similar UJA Federation of Greater Toronto program called Six Points Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund.

Six Points is made up of a group of people who pooled their financial resources and business knowledge to support innovative programs that promote Jewish causes in Toronto.

Kimel said that following a trip to Israel as part of the March of the Living program, he approached two of his friends, Sliwin and Belzberg, and brainstormed a way to tie his experience in Israel with his experience with Six Points.

"Our idea was to take the concept of the [Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund] and use those concepts, but apply them in Israel," Kimel said

Two years ago, 23 Jewish young professionals between 25 and 30 travelled to Israel as part of Next JVPF, and after meeting with a number of leaders of various non-profits, they chose three charities they wanted to support.

"We took the capital that everyone contributed as well as a few other philanthropic donations from other Toronto Jewish leaders who heard what we were doing," Kimel said.

In addition to Tech Career, to which they donated money to renovate one of their dorms to accommodate six more beds and to renovate their classroom, the group also chose to fund the building of a kitchen at a *matnas*, or community centre, in Sderot, and to build a dorm at a kibbutz to support the Na'ale program, which brings Jewish teenagers from the Diaspora to earn a high school degree in Israel and later join the Israel Defence Forces.

Belzberg, 27, who recently enrolled in Harvard Business School, said that when Next JVPF first established a connection with Tech Career, it was the first Canadian connection they had made.

"From there, Odette Levy from [Canadian toy company] Spin Master caught wind of this group and visited Tech Career when she was in Israel. She piloted, last year, a program to bring two students from Tech Career to work at Spin Master."

When Belzberg travelled to Israel last spring and followed up with the charities they donated to, he learned that Tech Career had planned to send two more students to Toronto to intern at a different company this summer. He was asked if he could find them another company willing to take on two interns.

Belzberg asked his brother, the CEO of KEV Group, a company that creates accounting software for schools, and he agreed.

"Their skill set was actually perfectly complimentary to what KEV Group does," Belzberg said.

The next step was securing the funding to bring the two Tech Career students to Toronto where they lived and worked for a month from late August to late September.

"We did the fundraising. Our group came up with the money and any shortfall we had, Odette Levy at Spin Master made up the difference," he said.

Belzberg credited Mindy Eklove, the national director of young leadership for Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA for handling all the logistics.

"And while they were here, one of the individuals from our group, [Noah Goldstein,] stepped up to chair the program and he got a whole bunch of our group members to do things like have them over for Shabbat dinner. Two of the group members took them to the [Canadian National Exhibition] so there was lots of social programming that went on while they were here," Belzberg said.

"I think that speaks to the power of the program. It really had a dual benefit. The participants who got to come here got international experience that they could bring home, but it also exposed our group to young Israelis who had very similar interests to what we have. [They] got to see the way we live, but we also got to see the way they live." ■

Iron Dome's 90 per cent success eclipsed by Trophy

PAUL LUNGEN
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During Israel's recent hostilities with Hamas in Gaza, the Iron Dome solidified its reputation as a highly effective missile defence system. With a 90 per cent success rate, it was able to knock down almost everything Palestinian terrorists threw at it.

But a different defence system, also developed and produced by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, had an even higher rate of success during Operation Protective Edge. The lesser-known Trophy system scored at a remarkable 100 per cent efficiency rating, destroying incoming rockets and missiles before they could damage Israeli armoured vehicles and tanks.

That gave Israeli soldiers the confidence to go about their missions without fear of unseen enemies killing them and knocking out their vehicles, said Ishai David, deputy spokesperson for Rafael. David, an Israeli native who grew up in Toronto before returning to Israel, was in Toronto last week to visit family. While in town, he briefed an audience at the Bernard Betel Centre on Rafael's contributions to Israel's strategic profile.

The company's industry-leading innovations played a huge role in Israeli strategic thinking and planning, David told *The CJN*. Not only did they change the face of the battlefield, but they provide Israeli policy makers with more options as well as more time to implement their tactics.

Imagine, he said, if there was no Iron Dome. What then would Israel's options have been when faced with a wave of 4,500 missiles fired by Hamas at cities like Ashdod, Ashkelon, Be'er Sheva and Tel Aviv.

You don't have to think too hard, he continued. Just look at what happened in 2006 during Israel's war with Hezbollah. The Shiite terror group hurled thousands of missiles into Israel from Lebanon, causing many to take to underground shelters and prompting thousands of others to flee to the south. Israel's industry in the northern part of the country came to a near standstill.

"There was nothing we could do about it, except run and hide in bomb shelters," he said. "Israel called on defence industries to tender a solution."

Iron Dome was developed and deployed in only 2-1/2 years. Normally it would take 10 to 20 years to produce a system that sophisticated, David said.

As a result, during Operation Protective Edge, people did not have to abandon their homes, though they still had to find bomb shelters to protect themselves from the 10 per cent of missiles that got through and from the debris of destroyed rockets falling to earth.

An IDF Merkava Mark IV tank equipped with Rafael's Trophy active protection system.

But business went on more or less as usual and the IDF could muster its forces and prepare for battle at a pace of its own choosing.

Similarly, the Trophy "active protection system," which is attached to the armoured vehicles, had important implications on the battlefield, he said.

David said once deployed, radars on the vehicles detect incoming rounds and, in less than a second, countermeasures are deployed to knock down the incoming rockets and missiles.

"Nobody has anything like Trophy," which was first used in 2009, he said.

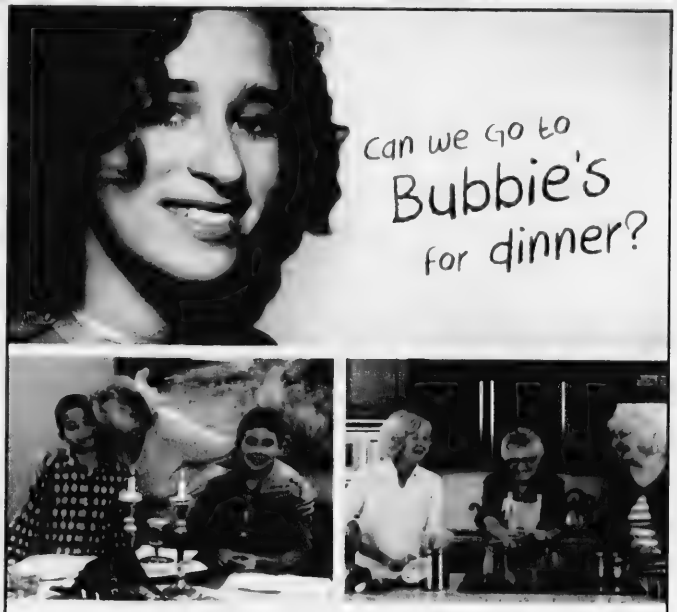
Trophy's effectiveness – it was employed more than 10 times in battle – has attracted the attention of defence ministries around the world, he added.

Interest in Iron Dome is less. "It's used only in Israel, as [no one] faces the kind of terrorist threats Israel does."

A third Rafael product, dubbed Spike, has been sold for decades to more than 20 countries. An offensive system, Spike consists of a family of three guided missiles with ranges of four kilometres to 25 kilometres that can be used against any substantial structure or vehicle. What makes them unique is the ability of the operator to monitor the target and change course in flight. This is particularly useful in urban areas when civilians might enter the picture and cause the attacking forces to abort the mission, David said.

Rafael is also working on another missile defence system called David's Sling, which it is developing in partnership with the U.S. defence contractor, Raytheon. It is expected to become operational in 2015 and will complement the Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 long-range missile interceptors, which are being developed by Israel Aerospace Industries in co-operation with Boeing.

Israel needs that level of missile defence, David explained. Current estimates suggest the country is ringed with enemies who can deploy as many as 170,000 rockets and missiles. ■



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Ran Kafri is an Assistant Professor, Molecular Genetics, at the University of Toronto, and Scientist, Cell Biology Program, Research Institute, at The Hospital for Sick Children. He received his PhD from the Weizmann Institute of Science, and performed post-doctoral studies at Harvard University.

October 27: Killing Cancer Cells: Can We Program How Cells Move?
with Dr. Atan Gross
Sponsored by Living Life on the Avenue Retirement Residence

Dr. Atan Gross is a member of the Department of Biological Regulation at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. He received his PhD at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and performed post-doctoral studies at the Dana Farber Cancer institute in Boston. Prof. Gross is the incumbent Marketa & Frederick Alexander Professorial Chair.

For information, contact the Synagogue office at 416-781-3511 or info@beth-tzedec.org.

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A long overdue memorial is finally erected in Poland

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

It was a memorial a long time coming, but the murdered Jews of Wierzbnik, Poland, were finally recognized last month, thanks to the perseverance of a man who never forgot.

On Oct. 27, 1942, 4,000 Jews were herded into the town square of Wierzbnik and deported to the Treblinka concentration camp. Another 200 Jews were shot on the spot. It has taken 72 years, but Howard Chandler finally had the satisfaction of seeing the dreadful events in his hometown, now called Starchovice, officially remembered with a memorial plaque in the town square.

Chandler, who now lives in Toronto, was 13 years old when his mother, older sister and younger brother were rounded up and deported to the death camps. His life was spared to work in the town's munitions factory.

It's taken him several years to convince the municipal authorities to place a memorial plaque. At one point, when he was guiding a group of American educators, he took them to his hometown and confronted the local government. "I used them, I said 'Look they are Americans, they are Catholics who are interested in this,'" he said in an interview.

Adding to his frustration was that monuments had been erected in memory of Poles who had been killed by the Germans, but nothing was in place to remember the destroyed Jewish community.

Finally, last month, after a few delays, the plaque was ready and Chandler travelled to Wierzbnik with his wife Elsa and daughter Bonnie for the official unveiling on Sept. 19.

At a civic ceremony, attended by the mayor and with a choir singing Jewish songs, Chandler spoke.

"I am one of the very few who stood on this very place and experienced the trauma witnessing the destruction of the very vibrant Jewish community of Starchovice, Wierzbnik," he told the crowd.

The memorial plaque in the market square on the day of the official unveiling.
THE CHANDLER FAMILY PHOTOS

"In the Jewish religion, remembering is a commandment, and that is what I do every day. I can see in my mind those thousands of innocent murdered souls hovering over us being thankful that their lives were not forgotten."

The plaque was not the first project Chandler and a few others have undertaken to keep the memory of the Jews in Wierzbnik alive.

When he first returned to his hometown in 1987, as a leader of the March of the Living, he saw the terrible state the Jewish cemetery was in.

"People used to raise chickens there, throw their garbage there," he said.

Eventually a Polish Jewish group agreed to put a fence around the cemetery and repair it. An expert in Jewish cemeteries was brought in to catalogue and map the monuments, so that people could find the stones of their relatives.

In 2002, the Wierzbnik Society, consisting primarily of Holocaust survivors and their children, travelled to Poland and after meeting with local officials, negotiated to have a room in the local museum dedicated to the Jews of the region.

The culmination of Chandler's efforts, though, was the unveiling of the memorial plaque in the town's square.

"People have the gift of memory, this allows us to remember not only the past, but also what happened here," Chandler said at the ceremonial unveiling.

"Those who did not study the past are bound to repeat it and something like this should never happen to anybody." ■

From left: Starchovice Mayor Sylwester Kwiecien, Elsa Chandler and Howard Chandler.

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Narayever shul marks 100 years with JCC exhibit

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In the early decades of the 20th century Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe established a vibrant community in the College and Spadina area of Toronto that supported about two dozen Orthodox congregations.

Many moved north when the community migrated up the Bathurst Street corridor in the 1950s.

Three of the four remaining downtown synagogues – the Kiever, Minsker and Markham shuls – have continued on in the Orthodox tradition. But in the 1980s, the First Narayever Congregation evolved into an egalitarian congregation, with women and men participating equally in a traditional service.

The change in the synagogue's direction was controversial 30 years ago, and it is documented in a new exhibition titled *Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation.* The show runs until Oct. 30 at The Gallery at the J in the Jacobs Lounge of the Miles Nadal JCC (MNJCC).

The exhibit also includes the earlier history of the synagogue before its relocation to Brunswick Avenue, its home since 1943.

Sharoni Sibony, manager of the Jewish life department at the MNJCC and a member of the Narayever, curated the exhibit. "In honour of the centennial, we wanted to uncover some of the stories of the synagogue's history," Sibony told *The CJN* at the exhibition opening.

She said it took two years of research by a volunteer team to put the exhibit together. Some of the records were found in the Ontario Jewish Archives, in people's homes, in the synagogue office and through online genealogy information. A translator helped with Yiddish minutes.

"We wanted to inform our own community and the wider community about our identity."

A plaque from the exhibit that says "Congregation Men of Narayev: here pray Jewish men daily in the morning and evening, Shabbat and Yom Tov."

Sibony pointed to minutes from a discussion when the younger egalitarian members considered changing the name of the congregation in the 1980s. At the time, they felt "like relics of the older community" and they thought the name, the Remains of Jacob, would better reflect this history, she said.

Old articles from *The CJN* about the congregation's transition to egalitarianism are included in the exhibition. In a 1983 article, Jeff Rosen wrote: "The absence of a mechitzah makes this Orthodox synagogue unique. This 69-year-old synagogue has torn down the barriers separating men and women."

Rabbi Ed Elkin, spiritual leader of the Narayever since 2000, spoke about the various transitions the synagogue has undergone, though he stressed that the there is a strong commonality in the congregation's goals in 1914 and today.

> *There are countless differences between today and when the congregation was founded but the aspiration to have a meaningful Jewish community in downtown Toronto has not changed.*

"There are countless differences between today and when the congregation was founded, but the aspiration to have a meaningful Jewish community in downtown Toronto has not changed. There is a lot of continuity."

He said the shul was founded by a landsmanschaft from Galicia who shared a common culture, but the congregation changed. "In time this group attracted people from other places. They became more diverse."

He stressed that the shul's membership has expanded and now includes people who are Jewish by birth and those who are Jewish by choice, as well as people of different races and diverse sexual orientations. "Who we are now would be unrecognizable to our founders."

Descendants of some of the original members were also on hand at the exhibit's opening. Max Heiber's three grandchildren, Sheila Shore, Earl Heiber and Sharon Barron, and three great-grandchildren, Sari and Erin Heiber and Jacquelyn Barron, attended.

Heather Wohl represented her family. Her grandfather, Henry Young, was president of the congregation from 1950 until his death in 1976.

Both of Marcia Beck's paternal great-grandfathers – Hirsch Petersaal and Nissan Beck – were also founding members of the shul. She said she discovered the Narayever in the 1990s when she was a social work student. "I was doing my master's downtown and I was looking for a place to daven and a community. I found the Narayever," she said.

"It just so happened to be the 'terrible shul' that my grandfather hated so much, because it had become egalitarian. The fact that it was egalitarian and that I could participate fully was exactly what drew me and kept me." ■

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Jewish Free Loan society marking 90th anniversary

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Jewish Free Loan Toronto (JFLT) has been around for 90 years – nearly as long as the Jewish community itself – so it only makes sense that an occasion that auspicious should be marked.

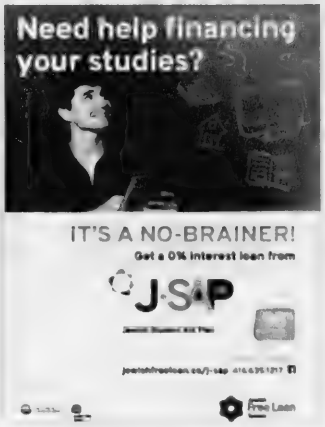
JFLT will host the 32nd annual International Association of Jewish Free Loans conference from Oct. 26-28, and part of that meeting will include a celebration to honour the hosts.

Twenty-three free loan societies from across North America, including those from Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal, will be represented in Toronto, along with one from Israel, to take part in the celebration.

All well and good, but getting out the message to the wider public about the good work done by the JFLT is the primary objective of its new executive director, Marra Messinger.

The JFLT is a community resource that is open for business and has room to grow. It is known in the community, but not known enough, she said.

The numbers she cites are modest but the loans can be transformative. An average of 300 people a year receive interest-free loans from the society. Altogether, about $1.95 million in loans is circulating in the community at any one time. In addition to providing business loans to would-be entrepreneurs, JFLT's mandate includes educational loans (58 so far this year), personal loans and even loans for those undergoing fertility treatment or adopting children.



"We deal with a lot of new immigrants from Russia, Israel and South America to help give them a start, room to breathe," said Messinger.

One young woman received a $7,500 loan to store her eggs for future use. The 21-year-old had been diagnosed with cancer and was scheduled to undergo a hysterectomy, rendering her infertile. The loan helped her put aside eggs for the future.

All JFLT loans are interest free, though the agency requires guarantors for each one. There is a sliding repayment schedule that varies with the amount borrowed as well as its purpose. The repayment schedules are quite generous, said Messinger.

Money borrowed for education – university, college, trade school or religious seminary – maxes out at $10,000 and can be paid back at $50 a month for those still in school, or up to $125 a month for those out of school.

People can receive up to $7,500 for fertility treatments, paid back at a rate of $125 a month.

> *We deal with a lot of new immigrants... to help give them a start, room to breathe*

"We have a very low default percentage," she said, "Zero per cent for student loans and only 1.4 per cent default on personal loans."

JFLT receives its funds from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the United Way, and from private benefactors, Messinger said.

The three-day conference of international free loan societies will include speakers and seminars on fundraising strategies, volunteering, risk management and marketing.

Leaving just enough time at the end for a little birthday celebration. ■

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United Jewish Appeal
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Cotler abstains from voting on IS combat mission

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler says he broke ranks with the Liberal party and abstained from voting on the government's motion to approve a Canadian air combat role in the fight against the Islamic State mainly because he cannot abide any co-operation with Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The longtime Montreal member of Parliament was the only one among the 137 Liberal members in the House of Commons on Oct. 7 not to vote against the motion, which will send Canadian aircraft and personnel to join an international coalition striking Islamic State targets in Iraq.

The motion passed 157-134.

In a statement posted on his website, Cotler said that he is "deeply disturbed by the [Prime Minister Stephen Harper's] statement that Canada would require the approval of the criminal Assad regime to carry out operations in Syria.

"To allow the perpetrator of war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide to green-light Canadian intervention is to turn R2P on its head. Assad should be a criminal defendant, not a coalition partner."

Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler

R2P is shorthand for the "responsibility to protect" doctrine, which holds that the international community has a responsibility to intervene when the government of a country where war crimes are taking place cannot or will not take action to stop it.

Cotler is in favour of military action, including a combat role for Canada, against the Islamic State, a jihadist group that he accuses of "genocidal incitement and mass atrocities."

But he said he could not support the government's motion because it "lacks clarity" about the strategy and limits of Canada's mission, including its costs.

"[T]he government has neither briefed nor consulted with the leaders of the opposition, nor has it shared some fulsome information about the mission that would have helped parliamentarians to make an informed choice," Cotler said.

The self-declared Islamic State – also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – calls itself a caliphate and controls large swaths of Iraq and Syria. In recent weeks it has gained notoriety for releasing online videos in which its members are shown beheading western hostages. ■

Correction

Last week's cover story "Sukkahville contest draws attention to affordable housing" stated that there are 1,000 people in Toronto's Jewish community on a waiting list for affordable housing. The correct number is actually 10,000.

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Essay

A mother's choice

RACHEL SANDERS
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It was not so long ago that I was a special education teacher who loved her work and her students. I taught at the same school for over a decade. Like many young teachers, I got pregnant and planned to return to work after my maternity leave.

The fall from this stable life full of hope, to the one I live in poverty happened so quickly.

My son was born prematurely and with complications. The first weeks of his life were spent in the neonatal intensive care unit. He was 2 1/2 pounds at birth. I was not able to bring him home until he reached five pounds which took a month and a half with me waiting each day by his incubator.

I left my job and another teacher took my place. It's hard walking away from a job you've worked at for so long. But my days consisted of endless appointments with occupational therapists and physiotherapists instead of the books and lesson plans I was used to.

What made our situation more difficult was that the doctors were unsure of his medical diagnosis. They did their best to decipher and treat his symptoms until finally, at the age of three, they diagnosed his rare and complex condition.

I took him to a special play group every Friday morning for medically fragile children. We were frequent visitors at The Hospital for Sick Children, sometimes spending several weeks at a time there. We were there so often it felt like our second home as we walked down the halls, saying hello and chatting with people, just as we would in our own neighbourhood.

During these years, I tried to go back to teaching several times. I was a single mother and we were reliant on my earning an income.

My first attempt ended abruptly after my son had to be rushed to hospital with pneumonia after being exposed to a simple cold from another child.

I thought part-time work may be easier. But despite my repeated attempts to continue my career in education, I decided to quit. I realized that there just wasn't enough of me to do both jobs – the job of taking care of my son had to be my priority.

> *Like any parent, my mission is making sure my son gets everything he needs.*

Today, I receive rental assistance from the Jewish community with my son who is now a young man.

I try to give back to the community as much as I can by being a member of the family advisory committee at the hospital and contribute to various research projects. Most of my time is still spent helping my son with his daily activities. I accompany him to many therapy and medical appointments. He has gained some independence but still requires a lot of support. His condition remains unpredictable, making it impossible for me to take on any work commitments.

In addition to regular therapy, he requires a special diet and expensive supplements. These costs are not covered by OHIP. Paying for medical expenses is an ongoing challenge.

Like any parent, my mission is making sure my son gets everything he needs. I want him to have the best quality of life possible. I would like people to know that giving up my teaching career to care for my son was not an easy choice. It was a choice I had to make. ■

Rachel Sanders (not her real name) is a member of the Jewish community benefiting from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Kehilla's Residential Programme's rental assistance initiative.

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Teen Torah reader excels

'She's becoming quite the pro, and there are very few mistakes'

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rebecca Bahar doesn't exactly have your average part-time job.

That's because the 17-year-old is a ba'alat korah.

Bahar became the main Torah reader at Beth Radom Congregation, her family's synagogue, about a year and a half ago, when the job became available.

"A couple of years back, when our rabbi left the shul, we didn't have anyone to read Torah," said Cindy Joseph, who runs Beth Radom's Hebrew school and is also Bahar's aunt.

"Rebecca had learned for her bat mitzvah how to read Torah and had shown an affinity for it, so she tried it a couple of times."

Bahar attended Associated Hebrew School until the end of Grade 8 and was confident in her abilities.

"I had a bat mitzvah when I was almost 14, and that's when I learned the notes," said Bahar, who's now in Grade 12 at William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute. "When I was 12, I learned how to read Haftorah, too, and I've been teaching at the synagogue since Grade 9.

"I guess I have a knack for applying the tune, and I saw the symbols and could just register them and I knew the words."

At first, her tenure was expected to be temporary. "It was sort of the idea of letting her help out until we had someone permanent," Joseph said. "But when Rebecca showed she was really capable of doing it, we floated the idea of doing it on a more permanent basis."

She may have been more nervous than her niece was. "I really was, because it's a lot of pressure and you can't make mistakes and everyone's listening," Joseph said. "I was worried people would be critical and not open to the idea of her being the reader."

But the congregation, which is conservative and egalitarian, has welcomed Bahar with open arms. "They're very supportive and very generous with compliments. They don't treat me like a little kid, which is the big thing," she said.

"They treat me like a professional, but in a warmer way," added Bahar, who first stepped into the role when she was still just 15 years old. "I've grown up with these people, see them every week and I'm very close with them. It's a very nice environment, and I'm not sure if I'd be able to do this in a different environment, because they're so gracious here."

Rebecca Behar is the main Torah reader at Beth Radom Congregation.

She's learning as she goes.

"Every few months I'd find that I would learn a new trick and it would help me so much," added Bahar, who got the full-time role after a few successful consecutive weeks last year. "I've really cut down the time it takes me to learn [each parshah], so that has helped me ease the nerves."

She still gets some butterflies, though.

"I always get nervous because it changes every [week]," Bahar said. "It's performance. Everything is new, sometimes you're dealing with a new audience, too, and every week is a new set and it needs to be learned accordingly."

Her aunt praises Bahar's ability to handle the stress. "It's nerve-wracking for her and all people who have to read from the Torah," said Joseph, whose on-bimah role is to correct the Torah reader.

"Usually, when she thinks she doesn't have it down, it's one or two mistakes," Joseph said. "[But] she's becoming quite the pro, and there are very few mistakes." ■

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This year, proceeds from the MDC Partners Invitational Tennis ProAm went to the Israel Tennis Centers' Children At Risk Program; last year the event focused on Co-existence Programming. The ITC's Children At Risk Program combines sport, welfare and role modeling in a pressure-free environment, to Jewish, Christian and Muslim children identified as "at risk" by Israel's Ministry of Welfare.
14 Israel Tennis Centers across the country in low economic regions embrace these children, and interrupt destructive life patterns by providing nurture, structure and goals based on the game of tennis.
Collectively this event has raised more than $1.2 million since inception 11 years ago.
This year's event featured Israeli Tennis Champions Harel Levy, Andy Ram, Jonathan Erlich, Canadian Tennis Stars Jesse Levine and Adil Shamasdin and a number of other top local tennis professionals. Guests at the opening party, which took place at Lanehouse on Bartlett, enjoyed a live performance by The Snakes, featuring York Racquets Club members Les Mandelbaum, Paul Rowen and Lawrie Senders.
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2014

Editor wins Emmy for PSA about post-traumatic stress

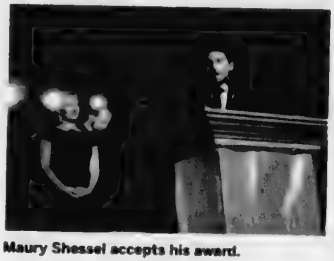
ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Maury Shessel clasped an Emmy Award in his hands recently in Los Angeles, the film and television editor was overwhelmed with humility.

"To accept an award at my age among people who have been doing this kind of work their whole career was very humbling," said Shessel, 29. "For me, it was all that hard work paying off into something amazing."

The Emmy was for best public service announcement (PSA), which Shessel and his project team garnered for *Help a Soldier Heal*, a powerful PSA about soldiers battling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which causes frequent episodes of fear and stress for people who have lived through traumatic events, such as war.

In the PSA, a man lies awake in bed in the middle of the night, with vivid flashbacks of his war zone experiences running through his mind, including the searing sounds of gun battles and missiles. As he gets up, he looks in the mirror and sees himself in full army gear, smoke billowing behind him. His wife awakens, hugs him and says, "It's OK."



Maury Shessel accepts his award.

Shessel, who was born and raised in Thornhill, Ont., wrote, directed and edited the PSA, which was produced by CBS. The production was done in partnership with Operation Gratitude, an American charitable organization that sends care packages and letters of support to active soldiers, wounded warriors and veterans. Some Canadians who served alongside U.S. troops have received packages from the charity.

"We hope that the PSA will raise the public's awareness of the prevalence of PTSD and the possibility of preventing or mitigating its occurrence by the simple, yet profound act, of showing support during [military] deployments," said Carolyn Blashek, founder of Operation Gratitude.

The focus on soldiers and their lifelong struggles is close to Shessel's heart, as he spent nine years in the Canadian Reserves.

"Even though the PSA features an American soldier, it's just as relevant to Canadians who served," he said.

Shessel developed an interest in film at an early age.

"When I was a kid, I was mesmerized by film," he recalled. "I felt like there was an entire world out there I could experience through film, like learning about the '60s and '70s or learning about the Holocaust."

After studying at York University, where he was involved in Jewish student activities, Shessel went to Ryerson University for film studies and then headed south of the border to earn a master's of fine arts from the University of Southern California's film and television production program.

Now living in Los Angeles, Shessel is working on editing his third feature film and is passionate about the often-overlooked importance of editing.

"People don't realize the impact an editor has on the film," Shessel explained. "The editor is responsible for taking all the shots and putting it together for the way in which the audience experiences the movie."

A proud Shessel poses backstage.

As he continues his film editing pursuits, Shessel has his sights sets on lofty goals.

"To work for one of the big five studios and edit a blockbuster, that's the dream," he said.

If his story continues to play out as it has so far, the dream may come true, sooner than later.

To watch the PSA, visit http://www.emmys.com/video/la2014-315032.

To learn about the impact of Operation Gratitude, visit www.operationgratitude.com. ■

Plants can have senses much like people: geneticist

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

Daniel Chamovitz

Plants, from the tiniest lichens to the tallest redwoods, can "see," "smell," "feel," and may even "remember," says an Israeli scientist whose book *What a Plant Knows: A Field Guide to the Senses* is an international bestseller that's been translated into 13 languages since it was published in 2012.

It's been a surprisingly successful foray into popular science for geneticist Daniel Chamovitz, director of the Manna Center for Plant Biosciences at Tel Aviv University (TAU).

He was in Montreal recently to confer with colleagues at McGill University about future collaboration, possibly in food security.

The anthropomorphism he attributed to plants is only slightly tongue-in-cheek – Chamovitz backs up everything in the book with scientific evidence. There is a verifiable genetic explanation for how smart and sensitive plants are.

In fact, he teaches an online course called What a Plant Knows for TAU students, using his book as the text.

In a video promoting the course, Chamovitz walks on the TAU campus, and proclaims that the trees know his shirt is blue because they see it, the grass under his feet knows he is stepping on it because it feels the weight, and the bush knows the neighbouring bush is sick because it smells it.

A native of Aliquippa, Pa., Chamovitz can afford to popularize his findings. His academic bona fides are secure. He holds a PhD in genetics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and carried out postdoctoral research at Yale University, where he discovered COP9 signalosome, a protein that is a building block of life.

Plants' recognition of different colours – at least, blue, red and green – has been proven through experimentation, he said. They will bend toward a blue light, and away from a red one, for example, but if flowering, they will prefer red, he said. Green elicits a neutral response.

They also know when they are being touched – but different species react differently to this type of sensory experience, he said.

Some plants can literally be touched to death, but an oak will never mind being hugged.

That sensitivity to touch can be observed in the expression of several of a plant's genes, he said.

Plants rely on their senses to survive, he said. Unlike animals, they have no choice of "fight or flight" when threatened, and have had to adapt to predation. The sense of touch allows trees, for example, to adapt to wind.

It's obvious in the Venus' flytrap, which reacts when an insect has landed, but all plants have a similar capacity, he said.

As for smell, that sense allows plants to distinguish between something desirable or deleterious – like a parasite. This is commonly observed when a fruit's ripening is hastened by placing it in a bag with a ripe fruit, he said. What's happening is the green one picks up on the ethylene gas the more mature one is giving off.

Hearing is the one sense plants appear not to have. So all that folklore about talking to your plants or playing certain kind of music for them is just that – or, at least so far, scientists like Chamovitz have not been able to find evidence that plants detect sound.

"The best music for plants is the type the gardener likes. In other words, a happy gardener will be a better gardener," said Chamovitz, who confesses to having a brown thumb.

Getting students and the public at large to appreciate plant life is Chamovitz's real aim. Besides their esthetic value, the professor is reinforcing that there would be no human life without them – no breathable air or potable water, no discovery of many drugs and, of course, no food.

"Understanding plants better is essential if we are to feed a world whose population passed seven billion, and is growing exponentially," Chamovitz said.

It's also a reminder that humans and plants are not that far apart biologically, he said. "Obviously, plants do not have organs, but at the cellular level, the mechanism by which plants sense is almost exactly the same as it is in humans."

The lesson, however, is not that plants think or have emotions or feel pain, he cautioned, so no one should hesitate to eat them. Most plants that bear edibles actually benefit from being picked, and that is why their produce is so enticing. ■

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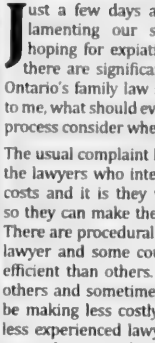
AVOIDING SEPARATION, COSTS AND DELAYS IN THE FAMILY JUSTICE SYSTEM



Family Matters

by

John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Just a few days ago, many of us were lamenting our sins on Yom Kippur, hoping for expiation. It's no secret that there are significant costs and delays in Ontario's family law system. So it occurred to me, what should everyone involved in this process consider when atoning?

The usual complaint I often hear is that it is the lawyers who intentionally drive up the costs and it is they who cause the delays so they can make themselves more money. There are procedural errors made by every lawyer and some could certainly be more efficient than others. Some are wiser than others and sometimes those others should be making less costly decisions. There are less experienced lawyers who occasionally may take steps that are unnecessary but most others work very hard. We are often confronted by a huge backlog in the Courts that frustrate speedy justice.

So what of the clients themselves and their sins to be atoned? The following is only a partial list of what some clients should consider.

First, subject to being victimized, some clients should not be so quick to separate before a sincere attempt at marriage counseling. Once you say goodbye its tough to go back. A generation ago, divorce was the last resort. Today, fewer spouses darn their socks anymore in this throwaway generation – the moment some see the slightest thread coming loose those socks go out the window. *"où sont les neiges d'antan?"*; *"where are the snows of yesteryear"* wrote the medieval poet Francois Villon. How quickly many forget why they married. They ignore the virtues of respect, restraint, patience and compromise. Many more jump at the first invitation to look for greener grass than before. In the "me" generation, some people just want to skip over the work involved in marriage. They figure that if it's too hard just end it and then with the next relationship they often make the same choices without resolving their impatience.

Virtue? What a strange ancient concept? How many of us really care about virtue anymore?

Secondly, don't punish the kids by involving them in the dispute if you do separate: making them allies against the other parent will not only ruin their childhood but often triple the costs of any dispute and lengthen it tenfold.

Thirdly, if there are issues of support or property division, don't try to hide any part of your income or assets or debts, especially if you are self-employed. The delay of full financial disclosure is one of the biggest reasons for tying up the family justice system because the longer one fails to exchange such info the longer the case will take to resolve and more it will cost. Endless motions for production and arguments over doing so clog up the court's schedule or negotiations and cost everyone a fortune in legal fees and court delays.

Fourthly, if your lawyer gives you an opinion, and if you trust him or her, accept it or get a second opinion. But after your questions have been answered follow the advice you've been given rather than contradicting your lawyer, causing further delays and the costs involved for going down the wrong path – whether it's a misguided appeal or a motion that should never have been brought.

Fifthly, in most cases, get yourself professional counseling if the separation is causing you emotional problems, as it usually does. Your lawyer will often be sympathetic but he doesn't have the training to be your therapist. Failing to deal with your anxiety can badly disrupt the resolution of any parenting or financial dispute.

Finally, if you can avoid doing so, don't represent yourself in Court. More and more litigants are trying to do so themselves without the slightest understanding of the law and procedure, leading to endless delays and significant losses when facing experienced counsel. Get legal aid if you are eligible. If not, finance the representation if necessary, as you would the purchase of a car. With experienced and competent counsel, the spouse/litigant will be much better off.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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Sponsored by the Community for Jewish Culture of B'Nai Brith Canada.

Technion alumni's ReWalk technology helps paraplegics walk

PAUL LUNGEN
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If you close your eyes and listen as Theresa (Terry) Hannigan makes her way across a room, you would swear RoboCop was coming your way.

The motors that power a robotic exo-skeleton kick in with a whirring sound as she takes step after step, but Hannigan is no crime fighter. She's a middle-aged woman from Long Island whose life took a 180-degree turn for the better when she was introduced to ReWalk, the futuristic contraption that she wears and allows her to get around.

At the juncture of science and science fiction, ReWalk was designed and developed by Dr. Amit Goffer, an alumnus of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology who became a quadriplegic after an accident in 1997.

Hannigan was in Toronto last week to demonstrate the device to Canadian supporters of the Israeli university, as well as to physicians, representatives of rehab hospitals and former Ontario lieutenant-governor David Onley, who has partial use of his legs after suffering childhood polio.

The ReWalk exo-skeleton is built and marketed by Argo Medical Technologies, headquartered in Marlborough, Mass. To date, some 150 have been used globally, mostly in the United States, Germany and Italy. One of the units is currently the subject of an investigative study at the University of Alberta.

For Hannigan, the ReWalk has been liberating. Paralyzed by an auto-immune disease she contracted while serving in the U.S. Army, she was wheelchair bound until she got a chance to try ReWalk for the first time in November 2011.

Before that, she admitted, she was depressed, worried about her future and unhappy that she was missing out on the little things in life, like taking a walk. She was also taking between 20 and 30 pills a day and suffering all the side effects of living in a wheelchair – increased skin diseases, diabetes, kidney problems, and other maladies.

ReWalk "changed my life."

Thanks to her military service, she was able to try out the ReWalk at a Veterans Administration (VA) facility and acquire it free of charge.

The wearable robotic system consists of a backpack that houses an onboard computer and battery, plus leg braces with motion sensors powered by small motors. The whole device is controlled by a futuristic device that resembles a wristwatch. Pushing a button instructs the system to stand up, sit down or walk, using a natural gait.

Theresa Hannigan, left, meets U.S. President Barack Obama during his visit to Israel in March 2013 as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks on.

On her first day trying out ReWalk, it sat her up, Hannigan recalled. Paralyzed from the chest down, with no feeling in her legs, she said it was a momentous change. "I was boo-hooing like a baby."

Within a week of beginning her training, she could walk on her own. She can even climb stairs wearing ReWalk.

"I was doing things my doctors told me I would not be doing," she said.

Soon, she started to feel better, both physically and psychologically.

Many of her ailments moderated. She didn't have to inject herself with as much insulin. Her bowels functioned better. She lost 35 pounds.

And her outlook on life improved.

"I was able to be a companion to my loved ones," she said. Until the ReWalk, the only embraces she'd get were from people putting her in and out of cars and a wheelchair. Now, "a simple hug" was within reach. She could look people in the eye when talking to them and feel better about herself.

"I can shake people's hands, interact like a regular human being," she said.

And she can walk alone. "I have to walk the device. It doesn't walk me.

"It's amazing," she said.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ReWalk OKed for home use in U.S.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Peter Escallier, vice-president of sales for Argo Medical Technologies, said the company has sold only about 200 ReWalk devices in North America, half of them last year. But the market is enormous.

In June, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave its approval to market the ReWalk for home use.

"Innovative devices such as ReWalk go a long way toward helping individuals with spinal cord injuries gain some mobility," the FDA stated in a news release. "Along with physical therapy, training and assistance from a caregiver, these individuals may be able to use these devices to walk again in their homes and in their communities."

At a cost of $69,500 a unit, it doesn't come cheap, but three years ago the price was more than $160,000.

Hannigan's and Escallier's Canadian visit was designed in part to raise ReWalk's profile and perhaps plant the seed for wider acceptance of the device by physicians, rehabilitation facilities and insurers. The upfront cost is recouped because of savings from avoiding other serious medical consequences of immobility, Escallier said.

The company is also developing relationships with local rehabilitation hospitals to ensure that Canadians who purchase the ReWalk will get the proper training and support, he added.

Meanwhile, Goffer, the creator of the ReWalk, is working on a followup invention, a device that will help quadriplegics like himself. It's currently in the prototype stage with, once again, the promise of a life-altering invention developed by one of the Technion's alumni. ■

Triking for Israel

Thousands of Israeli children missed out on a summer vacation due to the Gaza war, and Chabad on the Avenue's Family Shul decided to do something about it. Last month, the congregation hosted its first-ever trike-a-thon, in which children of all ages came out to trike, bike, scoot, skate, blade, stroll, walk or jog in the neighbourhood near the synagogue. Through sponsorships, the kids raised more than $13,000, which will go toward purchasing bikes and scooters for children living in Israel's south through Chabad's Terror Victims Project.

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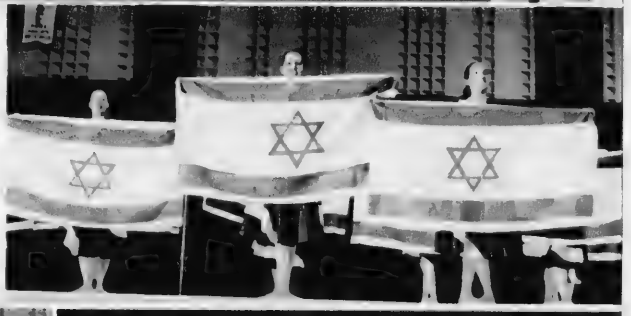

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Mount Sinai get $10 million donation for orthopedics

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Mount Sinai Hospital has received a $10-million gift from Toronto philanthropist couple Ira Gluskin and Maxine Granovsky, to be used towards expanding its orthopedic care division.

The donation, announced Oct. 7, will allow the newly named Granovsky Gluskin Division of Orthopedics, which deals with corrective bone and joint procedures typically caused by issues such as arthritis, rheumatologic conditions and chronic or congenital bone conditions, to provide more patients with access to complex reconstructive orthopedic surgeries, such as hip and knee replacements.

The gift will also fund the upgrading of operating rooms and the addition of necessary imaging and other equipment.

"This incredible gift will have immediate impact on the care that we are able to offer our patients. It will enable us to offer our patients the most leading-edge equipment, facilities and innovation available to them," said Dr. David Backstein, Mount Sinai's head of orthopedic surgery.

Granovsky and Gluskin, a co-founder of the Toronto wealth management firm Gluskin Sheff, are longstanding supporters of Mount Sinai, and the latter is both a member of its board and a leading investment adviser to the hospital.

"Many members of my family have been affected by a hereditary condition that affects the hips and ultimately necessitates hip replacement surgery," Granovsky said

"Ira and I have witnessed the pain and suffering that this condition has caused, and we are so grateful that there are surgical methods that, while difficult to undergo, have given our family members the ability to participate in daily activities that we all take for granted, pain free."

The donation comes at a key time, the hospital said.

"This is a wonderful, foresighted investment into a high-needs population," Kevin Goldthorp, president of the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation, told *The CJN*, because Canada has a growing cohort of senior citizens, for whom orthopedic surgery is commonly needed.

"With our aging population, musculoskeletal care is absolutely essential," Goldthorp said.

Ira Gluskin

Dr. David Backstein

"These disorders are the most common cause of long-term pain and disability in Canada, and probably account for about half of all chronic conditions in people above age 50."

He added: "Maxine and Ira are very discerning, intelligent and analytical philanthropists and they really took the time to understand our hospital."

He noted that Mount Sinai is already considered a national leader in joint replacement and revision joint replacement surgery – repeat surgeries to correct previous procedures or to replace implants that have failed – and that the hospital currently gets about 700 joint replacement cases each year.

Roughly half of these 700 cases are revisions, and patients are referred from cities across the country.

"[Mount Sinai] does a whole host of orthopedic work, from dealing with broken bone issues to complex surgeries for cancer reconstruction and rebuilding bones," Goldthorp said.

"Maxine and Ira looked at our hospital's existing excellence and understood that their gift could make an impact by adding new operating rooms fitted with [improved] equipment." ■

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Marc Epstein, Professor of Religion at Vassar College, has been teaching for over two decades. He currently occupies the Shoshana Shier Visiting Distinguished Professorship in the Art Department at the University of Toronto. A graduate of Oberlin College, Epstein received his MA, MPhil, and PhD at Yale University, and did much of his graduate research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Beth Tzedec Congregation
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בית צדק

Jamaican Jews determined to keep rich history alive

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Nestled in the heart of Kingston, Jamaica stands a 103-year-old synagogue that is the spiritual home to a centuries old Jewish community.

At Shaare Shalom – The United Congregation of Israelites, with its white sand floors and a warm island breeze wafting through the open doors of the sanctuary, about 25 people gathered on a Saturday morning for services led by Rabbi Dana Kaplan, an American-born rabbi who has been leading the 200-person Jamaican Jewish community since 2011.

On a trip sponsored by the Jamaican Tourism Board to promote Jewish heritage tours, reporters were invited to partake in a typical Shabbat service, meet with members of the Jewish community and learn about the community's 370-year history.

Ainsley Henriques, the Jewish community's leader and unofficial historian who said he can trace his roots back 19 generations, explained that at one point in Jamaica's history, in the early 18th century, its Jewish community was larger than North America's community.

It is believed that the first Jews may have arrived in Jamaica as early as 1494, following the Spanish Inquisition when Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or were expelled.

But it wasn't until the British conquered Jamaica in 1655 that Jews were permitted to practice their religion openly, allowing the Jewish community to flourish.

Although there were still restrictions on Jews, which included prohibitions on holding public office, and being forced to pay a Jewish tax, the Jewish community continued to grow and prosper.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, by 1831, members of the Jewish community were officially recognized as equal citizens, could vote and serve government roles.

At its peak in the late 19th century, there were roughly 2,500 Jews in Jamaica.

Marina Delfos, who is not Jewish, runs the Falmouth Jewish Heritage Walks, and takes cruise passengers on an excursion that includes a visit to the Falmouth Jewish Cemetery, one of the 13 Jewish cemeteries on the island that are being catalogued and restored.

Delfos estimated that there may be half a million Jamaicans of Jewish decent.

Henriques said many of Jamaica's professionals, businessmen and leaders can trace Jewish ancestry in their genealogy.

"Jamaican Jewish families today can trace their ancestry to the older congregations of Amsterdam and London as well as to their later American connections. Not only has this link of culture and heritage contributed to the present, but the past is full of the contributions of the Jamaican Jews to the island's rich history," Henriques wrote on the synagogue's website.

Despite Jamaica's rich Jewish history, the community has dwindled over the years, perhaps due to the island's acceptance of the Jewish community, which led to assimilation, coupled with the common practice of sending Jewish teens to study at universities abroad. Many of them choose not to return to Jamaica.

Patrick Mudahy, 77, said he was raised Roman Catholic, but his Jewish family history goes back generations – to the 17th century. Mudahy chose to embrace his Jewish heritage as an active member of the Jewish community, and a regular at Shabbat services at Shaare Shalom.

Mudahy believes that Jamaica's community started to suffer when the Jewish leadership decided to amalgamate the Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions into one congregation in the early 1920s.

"They each gave up so much, trying to organize it, trying to get it together. It broke down… to what we have today," he said.

Patrick Mudahy, left, is one of the few Jewish Jamaicans who regularly attends Shabbat services at Shaare Shalom. Rabbi Dana Kaplan, on the far right standing on the bimah, leads the congregation in prayer. SHERI SHEFA PHOTOS

Decades later, in the mid-1970s, the political environment in Jamaica changed dramatically, and many middle-class Jamaicans left.

"After the socialist experiment of the 1970s, there was a fairly large exodus of our community from Jamaica," recalled 62-year-old Paul Matalon, who was born in Jamaica. "That left a big hole. The migration continued into the '80s and our community dwindled… to what you see today."

Matalon, who has two children, a 31-year-old son who still lives in Jamaica and a 29-year-old daughter he refers to as a "High Holy Day Jewess" who lives in Miami, said he has memories of the sanctuary being full, spilling into the balcony.

"I think we benefited, in our generation, from what I call, basic fundamental Jewish education. It's not there today."

He said he left Jamaica in the 1990s for 19 years. He said that he had an opportunity to be part of another Jewish community in Miami, where he began to study Torah.

"When I lived in Miami, it changed a lot for me, personally. Religion didn't mean that I had to go to synagogue."

He said one of the rabbis he encountered encouraged him to dig deeper into his faith.

"I think that is one of the things we need here – a revival in our community. We need to engage in Torah study, so as not to become what I call High Holy Day Jews."

He said there needs to be more Jewish programming to encourage the community to be more involved.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

CANADIAN FRIENDS OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

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Jewish education is key to preserving the community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

"That, I think, is going to be the key going forward. The education of our children and in my case, my grandchildren, will keep a Jewish perspective alive and well here in Jamaica. I don't expect it to be like it was when I was growing up. I certainly don't think it will be like that, but again, our only chance of survival in the long run is going to be education for our children."

Margaret Adam is the founder of Star Club, a weekly program that offers Jewish students activities that highlight Jewish culture and also prepares preteens for their bar and bat mitzvahs.

Adam agreed that more Jewish programming is needed, but wondered whether anyone would participate.

"It's very difficult to get the kids together, to get the parents to send the kids for the groups," she said.

Sandra Phillips, 66, another Shaare Shalom regular, said her three children were raised Jewish, "but they just don't have the feeling to come to synagogue. There is something that is needed to bring them back here and I don't know what it is.

"I love my synagogue, I love my congregation, I love my people and I pray for all of us, one day to be united together again as one."

Marina Delfos, who runs Falmouth Jewish Heritage Walks, stands next to a 19th-century tombstone in one of the 13 Jewish cemeteries on the island that are being catalogued and restored. SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

Despite its shrinking presence, there is much evidence of Jamaica's once thriving Jewish community. This includes the Devon House, a 127-year-old mansion once owned by George Steibel, the son of a German Jew and the National Gallery of Jamaica, which recently exhibited the work of 19th century Jewish Jamaican artist, Isaac Mendes Belisario.

But the community still fears that what is left of the small, aging community will continue to dwindle and there won't be an active Jewish community to speak of.

However, they aren't willing to give up without a fight. Three years ago, Rabbi Kaplan became the first rabbi to lead the community in 33 years. In the time since Rabbi Bernard Hooker, Jamaica's former spiritual leader, returned to England in the late 1970s, until Rabbi Kaplan was hired, members of the Shaare Shalom shul volunteered to lead services and keep the congregation together.

"Preserving historic Jewish communities is, I feel, a very important task for us today," said Rabbi Kaplan, who led Temple B'nai Israel in Albany, Ga., for 10 years before coming to Jamaica.

"One aspect of becoming the first rabbi in Jamaica after 33 years was the challenge to actively appreciate the rich history of the congregation on one hand, with the need to move forward with modern planning on the other," he said.

Rabbi Kaplan said he learned that Jamaican Jews have a lot of pride in their roots and wanted to promote their history more than they already were.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

Intermarriage is a key concern, rabbi says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

"I did have specific ambitions for the community, which included dramatically increasing the number and range of activities, increasing our profile in the city and country as well as abroad, changing the social atmosphere in the synagogue to make it more welcoming... moving decision making from the hands of literally one person to the broadest possible range of individuals, bringing new people and new ideas into the synagogue... and most of all, creating a distinctive Jamaican Judaism that could embody the hopes, beliefs, practices, and activities of all of those who were committed to progressive Judaism on our island," he said.

Looking back over his last three years as the community's leader, he said he "severely underestimated the social forces that were pushing to maintain the status quo," even though it was clear to many that what may have worked in decades past, was no longer meeting the community's needs.

As is to be expected in a Jewish community like Jamaica's, assimilation and intermarriage is a big concern.

"It is a very different Jewish society in Toronto, Montreal, and other large cities, so it may be hard for Canadian Jewish readers to grasp the degree of assimilation in a place like Jamaica, but virtually no one even keeps a bit of kashrut and the vast majority of the community is intermarried," Rabbi Kaplan said.

"As someone who deeply believes in the potential of conversion to Judaism, I would be very keen to convert non-Jewish spouses who might be interested and there have been a few such opportunities. But most of the intermarried couples prefer to remain that way, in large part because the Jewish spouse does not have clear Jewish religious beliefs that they are able to express in a coherent manner."

But, he added, Shaare Shalom does not currently have a conversion program. He said the leadership allowed for a few conversions in his first year as Jamaica's rabbi, but "barred all subsequent attempts."

Despite some of the barriers Rabbi Kaplan has met to implement real change in Jamaica's Jewish community, he is optimistic about its future.

"There is so much enthusiasm for Judaism throughout the country and we have such potential to grow, not only numerically, but in terms of our impact on the society, that it would be a terrible tragedy if we were not able to fulfil this potential." ■

Jamaican Jewish community leader Ainsley Henriques said the 103-year-old Shaare Shalom synagogue is important to the island's rich Jewish history. SHERI SHEFA PHOTOS

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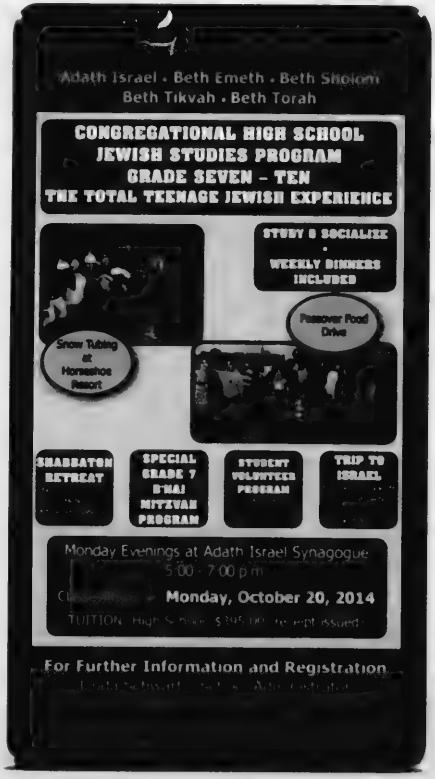
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GUEST VOICE

Medical journal engages in crass anti-Israel propaganda

Mike Fegleman

The *Canadian Medical Association Journal*'s (CMAJ) Sept. 22 editorial by its deputy editor, Matthew Stanbrook, encourages Canada to bring 100 wounded Gazan children to Canada. This seems like a reasonable proposition on a prima facie level, but upon further evaluation, the initiative is nothing more than a crude propaganda campaign tacitly designed to tarnish Israel's reputation.

On a principled level, caring for innocent children caught up in hostilities between warring parties shows both compassion and a commitment to human rights.

Yet, of all conflicts being waged worldwide, why is Gaza being singled out for concern, especially at a time when, in the broader Middle East and Arab world, children are regularly targeted, wounded and killed? A region where kids are routinely used as child soldiers, such as when the Hamas terrorist organization recently turned Gazan youth into terrorists by giving them grenades and suicide bomb vests. Just consider how Hamas is responsible for the deaths of 160 Gazan children who died while building terror tunnels.

Make no mistake, Hamas makes no apologies for its cynical abuse of Palestinian children or for the fact that it stole humanitarian aid destined for the Palestinian civilian population.

Why haven't we heard of a similar initiative for Syrian or Iraqi children in need of treatment in Canada? There are tens of thousands of children around the world whose victimization and plight have gone ignored and who are in desperate need of medical care, but why the selective focus on Gazan kids? Answer: to blacken Israel's image.

Perhaps most troubling with the *CMAJ*'s editorial ("Canada must help the wounded children of Gaza") is the way it altogether failed to acknowledge that Hamas initiated the conflict with Israel by first kidnapping and murdering three Israeli teenagers in June and then firing more than 4,000 rockets at Israel, along with building terror-attack tunnels that allow terrorists to enter Israel proper, specifically near playgrounds and schools, to massacre innocents.

An Israeli soldier inspects the opening of a Hamas tunnel. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Of course, the whole issue about the need for Canada to care for injured Palestinian children is moot, as Israel provides first-class medical care for Palestinians (and Syrian refugees), and aid can also be provided in Palestinian Authority-controlled areas of the West Bank.

Importantly, Deepak Obhrai, parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, explained Canada's official position as follows in a letter to the *Toronto Star*: "Our government has applauded the humanitarian instincts of those who want to assist victims in this conflict. We went on further to explain that those who want their support to have the greatest impact must recognize the importance of ensuring innocent victims receive the medical support they need close to their families and loved ones, and that includes avoiding the medical risks and dangers of being transported overseas.

"This is why we are exploring options with international partners and stakeholders on how best to deploy Canadian medical expertise, financing and material to support victims and create sustainable medical solutions in the region.

"This includes ensuring greater capacity at hospitals in Gaza – as well as Jordan and Israel – that can treat the wounded. This includes the field hospital at the Erez crossing, which is currently being under-utilised, as well as others in the region. It also includes providing ways for doctors wishing to treat those injured in the conflict – Israeli and Palestinian alike – to provide their services in hospitals abroad, in a way that would allow them to grow local medical capacity there, transfer their medical expertise to the local population, and help injured innocents avoid the medical risks and dangers of being transported overseas…"

Obhrai noted that Canada characterizes injured Palestinian children as "victims of Hamas," as "this terrorist organization (as designated in Canadian law) continues to put innocent Palestinians at risk, cowardly hiding behind them in civilian areas, while launching rockets indiscriminately into Israel. It also ignores the fact that Israel takes great precautions to protect civilians. Can Hamas say the same?… Hamas has broken and walked away from ceasefire agreements time after time. It ignores that they put humanitarian aid workers in jeopardy, while Israel tries to push basic needs into Gaza for those struggling under Hamas' rule… Hamas' leaders continue to spend limited resources on terror tunnels and weaponry, instead of infrastructure, education and health care."

Significantly, Stanbrook's editorial only obliquely acknowledged Israeli casualties and failed to inform *CMAJ* readers that Israeli cities including Sderot and Ashkelon have borne the brunt of more than 15,000 Palestinian rockets in recent years that were intended to maim and murder innocent civilians and children, especially when terrorists aim rockets at nurseries and kindergartens.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

GUEST VOICE

Israeli children's suffering in Gaza war ignored

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

When U.S. President Barack Obama visited Sderot, he said: "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I would do everything to stop that, and would expect Israel to do the same thing."

Even though Israel disengaged from Gaza and withdrew its 8,500 settlers and the entire army in 2005, a quarter of a million Israelis continue to be in the range of these incessant rocket attacks.

Israeli men, women and children, particularly from the town of Sderot, have suffered from post-traumatic stress due to these unrelenting Palestinian rocket attacks. These rockets are fired indiscriminately and explode in hospitals, kindergartens and residential homes; killing non-combatants and injuring thousands of Israelis.

In particular, the suffering and trauma of Israeli children whose education and daily lives have been affected by conflict is very real – their lives have been torn apart by war and Hamas terrorism. In the wake of more than 10 years of rocket attacks from Gaza, Israeli children of Sderot have suffered psychological trauma and social problems, and have persistent difficulty with concentration. According to a NATAL study (Center for Victims of Terror and War), 70 per cent to 94 per cent of Sderot children suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder while 28 per cent of children are diagnosed with PTSD. About 30 per cent of Sderot adults are also diagnosed with PTSD. Anxiety symptoms among children often include sleeping difficulties, nightmares, sweating, development regressions, bed wetting and fear of the outside.

Regrettably, the plight and trauma of these Israeli children was conveniently ignored by the *CMAJ*, who instead preferred to engage in crass anti-Israel propaganda. ■

Mike Fegelman is executive director of HonestReporting Canada.

SeeJN | UnGala benefits young Third World heart patients

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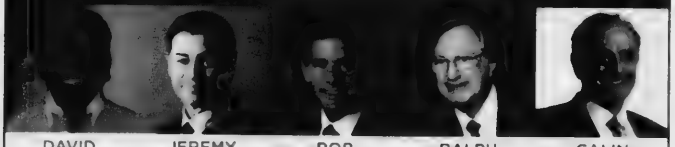

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WEIZMANN CANADA

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2014

Promoting Quebec-Israel commerce priority for envoy

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

If fate had been different, Montreal's new Israeli consul general might have been a Canadian.

After World War II, Ziv Nevo Kulman's grandfather received a visa to immigrate to Canada, along with the few dozen survivors from his Galician town, Sokal, who had found refuge in Germany. The Canadian government was looking for farmers and the Schiffenbauers (the family name at the time) had, indeed, been managing the estates of ruined aristocrats in that part of Poland.

The family, including Nevo Kulman's father and sister, had survived by literally living underground.

But the family decided to make aliyah to the new State of Israel; Nevo Kulman's father David Nevo would become a prominent professor of education and chief scientist in the education ministry, and Nevo Kulman would join the foreign service in 1995.

His mother was born in Haifa in 1940, her family having left Poland before the war. He adopted the name Kulman after his maternal grandmother, who had lost many relatives in the Holocaust, died.

Nevo Kulman, 45, arrived in Montreal just before Rosh Hashanah, succeeding Joel Lion who left in mid-August. Like his predecessor, Nevo Kulman is responsible for Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, and serves as Israel's permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations agency based in Montreal.

Nevo Kulman, who has previously held postings in Tokyo, Prague and Paris, said he applied to come to Montreal because

Israeli Consul General Ziv Nevo Kulman

he feels comfortable in a multicultural, multilingual milieu. He also knew that the Jewish community here was a close-knit one, with strong ties to Israel.

He is conversant in six languages, including, of course, French, but he is working on sounding a little more Québécois and a little less Parisian.

The Tel Aviv native speaks a vernacular English because he spent four years of his childhood in the United States – in Columbus, Ohio and Kalamazoo, Mich., because of his father's career.

The congenial Nevo Kulman, who is unmarried, is eager to sample life in Quebec and within its Jewish community. He asked to come just before the High Holidays in order to experience Jewish life during such an intense period.

He managed to visit three synagogues during Rosh Hashanah – the three oldest congregations: the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim and Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. He went apple picking in Rougemont during his first weekend.

Nevo Kulman studied art history at Tel Aviv University. "I was a bit of a rebel; my parents wanted me to be an architect or an engineer," he said. After his military service, he travelled around Europe soaking up the culture.

"When I applied to the foreign service in 1995 it was a time of euphoria after the Oslo accords. We thought there would be embassies opening all over the Arab and Muslim world.

"I was in the biggest cadet corps – 51 – in history. Usually, only about 20 are accepted."

His most recent job was back in Jerusalem, as director of the foreign service's training department.

Cultural affairs have been the specialty of his diplomatic career until now starting in Tokyo in 1999, but during his expected four years here, he hopes to put the focus on strengthening economic relations.

"No one can explain it. Political ties between Israel and Canada are so good, there's a free trade agreement, so how come that does not translate into more commercial ties? It could be much better."

Promoting Israel in Quebec is especially challenging, he indicated. "If Israeli companies want to come to North America, they look to the United States. And if they are looking in Canada, they go to Toronto."

Nevo Kulman plans to show entrepreneurs in both Quebec and Israel the "uniqueness" of each other. Quebec is strong in aerospace and cyber-technology, for example, an expertise that Israeli business could benefit from, he said.

Some adaptations have to be made to conduct business in this province, but that is not insurmountable, he believes.

He is cognizant that the conflict in Gaza this summer means he will have to reinforce the message that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and that it remains "the startup nation."

Days before arriving in Montreal, Nevo Kulman accompanied Steven Blaney, Canada's minister of public safety and emergency preparedness and a Quebec MP, on the Be'er Sheva leg of Blaney's Israeli visit.

It gave both of them the chance to see the opportunities for Canadian tech companies at the new CyberSpark complex in that Negev city, and how its twin, the Montreal Jewish community, has helped Be'er Sheva, which was hit with more than 200 rockets during the Gaza conflict, he said.

Of course, Nevo Kulman will not neglect the cultural side of things. "Culture is in my DNA," he said, and will build on the strong representation of Israeli artists and writers, and especially films, that come to Quebec.

"Montreal is the cultural hub of Canada, a city of festivals, and Quebec strongly supports the arts. I was always surprised at how many French-speaking Canadians perform abroad," he said.

When not working, Nevo Kulman is a bit of a fitness buff. He's been vegetarian since age 13. ("I loved animals. I could just not see a chicken running around and then eat it. But I'm not militant about it.")

Mountain biking is his favourite sport, but with that season winding down here, he is looking to take up a winter activity, perhaps snowshoeing. ■

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Dinner in New Mexico

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My husband, Jack, and I recently visited New Mexico for the American Association of Dental Consultants convention at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa in Santa Ana Pueblo.

This amazing place is like another world. Owned and designed by the local Indians – yes that's what they are called there – it is located in the desert about halfway between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. There are mountains in every direction and very little vegetation, although you may see small flowers and also plants that eventually turn into the tumbleweeds.

Surprisingly, even cactus does not grow here. Sand is everywhere. Merchants constantly sweep their parking lots, and mall floors are slippery with sand. The architecture is fascinating – the hotel and the majority of buildings from Albuquerque to Santa Fe are adobe style, some beautiful, others makeshift. Some are original pueblo architecture, traditional architecture of the Pueblo Indians of the southwestern United States. Most are more recently built and considered "Faux-Dobe" or "Santa Fake." Either way I got a kick out of looking at them.

With the exception of chain restaurants, most restaurants and banquet halls serve New Mexican cuisine, which is little different than the Mexican food we may be familiar with. It's a fusion of Spanish and Mediterranean, Mexican, Pueblo Native American and cowboy chuckwagon. New Mexican waiters always ask the official question, "Red or green?" This refers to the choice of red or green chili sauce that is spooned over most dishes.

Restaurants and banquet halls are often decorated with native art, table runners with Indian designs topped with centrepieces made with local rocks and/or interesting hand-painted pottery bowls. A typical dinner in Santa Fe may consist of Enchiladas Del Norte, yellow corn tortillas filled with Mexican cheese and served with green chili sauce, Three Sisters Vegetables, Pasole and a spicy corn stew. Black beans are a must. These dishes are complemented by the addition of sour cream, guacamole, Pico de Gallo and Sopaiphille, a square, deep fried, bread-like pastry served with honey that is often spiced.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Three Sisters Vegetables

According to Native American legends, corn, beans and squash are the three inseparable sisters who only grow and thrive together. This ultimately led to a sustainable farming system as well as a healthy diet for generations of people.

- ❑ 1 tbsp. olive or canola oil
- ❑ 1 large onion, sliced
- ❑ 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ❑ 1 jalapeno chili, finely chopped
- ❑ 2 large yellow zucchini squash, cut into 1-in. pieces
- ❑ 2 large green zucchini squash, cut into 1-in. pieces
- ❑ 1 lb. green beans, cut into 1-in. pieces
- ❑ 1 cup whole kernel corn
- ❑ 1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- ❑ 2 16-oz. cans kidney beans, rinsed and drained

Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Cook onion, garlic and chili in oil about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally until onion is soft. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook over low heat 10-15 minutes, stirring frequently until zucchini is cooked through. Serve hot.

Green Chili Sauce

- ❑ 1 tbsp. butter
- ❑ 1 small onion chopped
- ❑ 2 tbsp. flour
- ❑ 1-1/2 cups vegetable stock
- ❑ 1 cup chopped green chili
- ❑ 1 large garlic clove, minced
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. ground cumin

In a small pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until tender. Stir in the flour until combined and add the stock. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 20 minutes. Serve warm.

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Enchiladas and pasole for dinner

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Pasole

You will wonder where this side dish has been all your life – it's absolutely delicious. One pot may not be enough. Hominy is a bit difficult to find. I found it at Coppa's, 4750 Dufferin St., just south of Steeles Avenue. It is in the ethnic food isle and is labelled Nu Pack Yellow Hominy Corn. It bears a COR hechsher.

- ❑ 2 cups hominy
- ❑ 10 cups vegetable stock
- ❑ 3 tbsp. canola oil
- ❑ 1 onion, chopped
- ❑ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ❑ 2 tsp. oregano
- ❑ 1 tsp. thyme
- ❑ 1 tbsp. hot chili sauce or to taste
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 2 tsp. dried cumin

Rinse hominy until the water runs clear. Place hominy in stock and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook covered for 1 hour.

Sauté onion in oil until soft and translucent, add garlic and continue sautéing until garlic is soft. Add remaining ingredients to the pot and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 2 more hours or until the corn kernels are open, soft, but not falling apart. Add additional stock or water if needed. Taste and add additional salt or chili sauce if required. Pasole can be refrigerated and reheated.

Enchiladas Del Norte

Mouth-watering cheesy goodness.

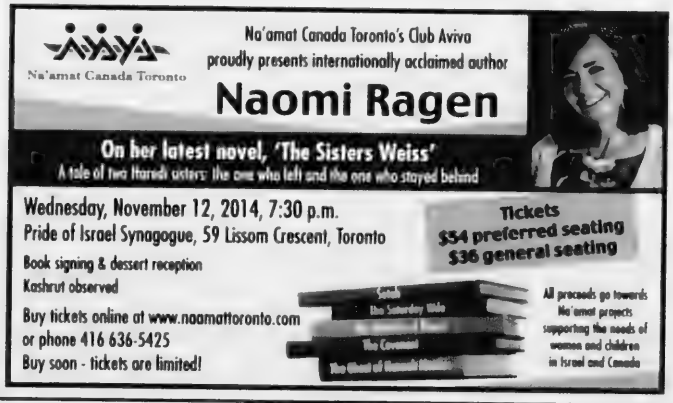
- ❑ 1 400-g tin chopped tomatoes
- ❑ 1 medium green chili
- ❑ 1 medium red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- ❑ 3 tbsp. chopped fresh coriander plus extra for garnish
- ❑ juice of one lime
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 8 large yellow corn tortillas
- ❑ 4 oz. grated Queso Fresco or ricotta cheese
- ❑ 5 oz. grated Queso de Oazaca or Mozzarella cheese
- ❑ 3 oz. grated Anejo or Romano cheese
- ❑ sour cream, regular or low fat
- ❑ canola oil to spray pan

Drain tomatoes into a sieve over a bowl. Remove the stalk from the chili, cut it in half, discard the seeds, chop the flesh very finely and place it in a bowl.

Combine the chopped onion, drained tomatoes, chopped coriander leaves and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper. Spray a baking dish with canola oil. Spoon some sauce into the bottom of the baking dish. Mix the first two cheeses together in a bowl.

Heat a frying pan on high. When hot, dry-fry each of the tortillas for 6 seconds on each side. Place one tortilla on a flat surface and spread a tablespoon of sauce not quite to the edges, place a heaping tablespoon of the cheese mixture, then a tablespoon of sour cream. Roll up the tortilla and place it in the baking dish with the sealed-side down.

Repeat this with the others, then spread the remaining sour cream on top of the tortillas and sprinkle the rest of the sauce over the top, followed by the Anejo or Romano cheese. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 25-30 minutes, garnish with the extra coriander and serve with sour cream and Green Chili Sauce.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Raising awareness key to ending poverty

Mark Zarecki

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"Twenty-two per cent of jobs in Ontario are precarious, meaning not stable, not full-time. There is no pension, no union, and these are often the jobs that youth have, that women have, that newcomers get, that older people might have, that the disabled might have, and that is where we are seeing a huge rise in poverty."

Perhaps the first step to eradicating poverty in the Jewish community is raising awareness about the fact that it is an issue at all, Singer said.

"It's a myth that we don't have Jewish poor. The starting point is making the community aware that we are not much better off than the rest of the community at large. We are maybe a percentage point or two below the national average, and that is nothing to be proud of. The fact that we are a well-off and generous, philanthropic community, we should be addressing the problem and helping people," Singer said.

Robyn Segall, programs and marketing director at Ve'ahavta in Toronto, said she has encountered many people who are shocked to learn there are poor Jews.

"When we talk about our program to serve the homeless, very often the first question is, 'But are there Jewish homeless? That's impossible,'" Segall said.

"There certainly are Jewish people living on the streets... People live on the street for so many different reasons – they're escaping abuse, they are escaping a myriad of things, dealing with mental illness, and for each person, there is a different appropriate response and sometimes what the community has to offer isn't always what they need."

Zarecki illustrated the fact that this issue is of vital importance to the Jewish community by referring to a quote he heard from a social work professor at McGill University that stuck with him.

"A Jew is poor among Jews and Jewish among the poor," Zarecki said. "So poverty has two impacts. It marginalizes Jews because they are not fully accepted within the Jewish community, and they are not fully accepted in the poor community."

Zarecki also suspects that the Jewish poverty rate is actually higher than is being reported.

"When you look at government statistics, they don't include Jewish quality of life. What I mean by that is, for somebody who wants to affiliate with the community, it costs money. Eating kosher food, sending a child to a Jewish school, going to a synagogue, living near a Jewish facility – often the rents are higher in an area where there is a concentration of Jews," he said.

"My thesis is that Jewish poverty increases assimilation... That is why it is incumbent on Jewish communities to reach out to low-income people because... they will vanish from the community if they're not reached out to." ■

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Hezbollah lays down new ground rules

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

The ring of explosives detonated alongside an IDF patrol on the border with Lebanon on Oct.7 was another in a series of messages from Hezbollah to Israel. It was a brazen attack, carried out inside Israeli territory, the message being that, from now on, every incident in which Israel causes Lebanese injuries will be greeted with a response along the Lebanese or Syrian borders.

As opposed to other recent cross-border attacks, in which the perpetrators didn't claim responsibility, the message this time was loud and clear: a full admission by Hezbollah. The claim of responsibility also gave a reason for the attack.

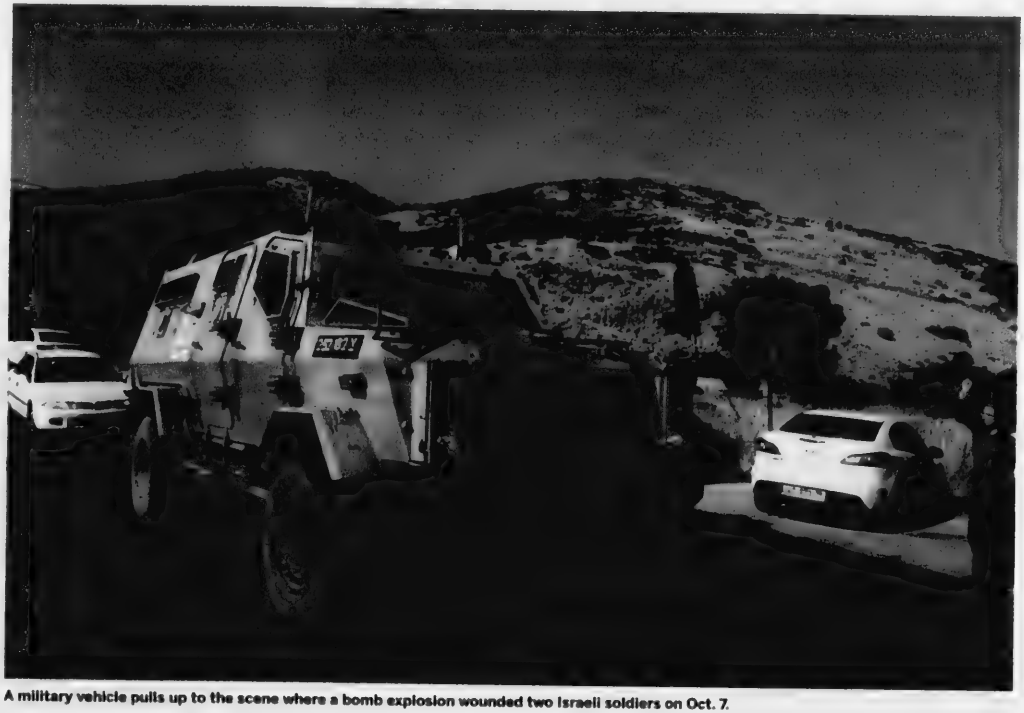
"The Group of the Martyr Ali Hassan Haydar detonated an explosive device in the Shebaa Farms," the Shiite group said in a statement, using the Lebanese name for the Mount Dov region, where the attack took place.

Haydar was a Hezbollah sapper killed on Sept. 5 in Lebanon while attempting to defuse an explosive device attached to an alleged Israel spying apparatus discovered that day. Hezbollah vowed revenge.

At first blush, the developments in Mount Dov, including the Hezbollah claim, appear to portend a larger conflagration on the horizon. The potential for deterioration in the situation is only increasing, with the Shiite group trying to lay down new red lines for Israel that the latter is likely to cross. Israel will almost certainly continue to disrupt the smuggling of game-changing weapons from Syria to Lebanon (indeed, those violate Israel's own avowed "red line"), forcing Hezbollah to respond the next time it or its allies come under IDF attack.

However, there are no indications that either side has real interest in a sustained conflict. Israel, fresh out of a 50-day war in the Gaza Strip with a not-insignificant hole in its defence budget, is mostly looking for quiet. The leadership in Jerusalem, which well understands that another war is likely to damage its position, is wary of the consequences of a wide-ranging campaign against Hezbollah, with many more rockets hitting Israeli cities than during the conflict this summer, and many more casualties.

The Shiite organization, meanwhile, is taking advantage of Israel's wariness in order to establish a new set of ground rules.



A military vehicle pulls up to the scene where a bomb explosion wounded two Israeli soldiers on Oct. 7.

And yet one doubts whether Hezbollah, which doesn't have many available fighters, is seeking to escalate the situation to all-out war or even a more limited conflagration. The organization is tied up with a war that has already been raging for three years, and last week eight of its fighters were killed in battles in Syria's Qalamoun region. In all, a third of Hezbollah's forces are currently in Syria, where they're battling a plethora of Sunni extremist groups, including the notorious Islamic State.

It's thus likely that in the coming months we'll see occasional flare-ups along the border but no all-out escalation. Still, the outcome of Oct. 7's attack, which wounded two soldiers, could have been much worse, and one is forced to recall that in July 2006, no one predicted that a cross-border attack (with far more dire results) would precipitate the Second Lebanon War. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Israel discusses Ebola preparedness

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israel, aiming to increase its preparedness to deal with the Ebola virus, will increase its efforts to find people who have entered the nation from several West African countries.

That was among the measures agreed to at a meeting last week of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with government officials.

The countries named were Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, which have seen the greatest spread of the virus. The health and foreign ministries will continue to urge Israelis to avoid travelling to those countries.

Joining Netanyahu at the meeting were Yael German, the health minister; Yisrael Katz, the transportation and road safety minister; and Deputy Interior Minister Fania Kirshenbaum. Also, representatives of the Israel Police, Airports Authority and Foreign Ministry participated in the discussion.

Israel's Foreign Ministry also announced it would send three mobile emergency clinics to west Africa in an effort to prevent the spread of Ebola. ■

OPINION

None is too many is simply unacceptable

Yair Lootsteen

According to statistics published by the Population and Immigration Authority, in the last decade or so some 65,500 people "infiltrated" Israel. As of June 30, 48,212 remained in the country – 73 per cent from Eritrea, 19 per cent from Sudan, almost all the rest from other African countries.

Most of them left autocratic homelands, reaching Israel via the Sinai Peninsula after long journeys through northern Africa. The Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers estimates that 5,000 to 7,000 are survivors of torture camps in Sinai.

To curb the influx of Africans via Sinai (and terrorists, arms, drugs and other illicit items), in 2012 construction was completed of a physical barrier along the Israeli-Egyptian border. Some 17,300 Africans entered Israel via Sinai in 2011. Fewer than 120 entered in 2013.

A large percentage of African migrants came to low-income neighbourhoods in south Tel Aviv, where their presence created immense tensions with the locals. Irresponsible politicians exploited and encouraged xenophobic sentiments. At the height of one wave of friction, Likud MK Miri Regev called the Africans "a cancer in our midst."

The Africans' supporters say most are refugees from dictatorial regimes. At the least, the argument goes, they should be afforded the opportunity to prove they deserve refugee status, and in the meantime be treated humanely. But Benjamin Netanyahu and his government have declared the Africans illegal migrant workers, contending they should be incarcerated until they can be returned to their home countries or relevant third-party countries.

In 2012, the Knesset passed a law authorizing the incarceration of African "infiltrators" for up to three years, almost unconditionally. Nearly 1,800 Africans were subsequently imprisoned in a bleak facility deep in the Negev desert. Thankfully, that law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in September 2013.

Less than three months later, the Knesset passed another law, this time authorizing a year's imprisonment for anyone caught crossing the fence, and establishing an "open facility" called Holot, also in the Negev, to which all Africans not legally designated refugees (to date less than a handful have received such designation) could be sent. There, Africans are locked down nightly and required to be present at three daily roll-calls. They're forbidden to take on any employment.

During two visits to Holot, I found the "prisoners" despondent. Almost all want to go home – they miss their families and friends – but won't for fear of being imprisoned, or much worse. They also dread the prospect of remaining in Holot indefinitely. In 2013, 4,800 Africans, mostly Sudanese, left Israel. It's said some have not been heard from since.

On Sept. 22, the Court unexpectedly struck down the new law, when it too was challenged, ordering that Holot be closed within 90 days. Several ministers have since called for legislation limiting the Supreme Court's authority to declare Knesset laws unconstitutional.

During his recent trip to the United States, Netanyahu declared he would deal with the problem in accordance with the law. "There is no asylum seeker problem in Israel. They are illegal job immigrants," he said, and declared Israel has the right to control its borders.

The prime minister would be ill-advised to continue pursuing his present policy of "legally" encouraging Africans to leave Israel by making their lives here miserable. The Israeli-Egyptian barrier has effectively stemmed the tide, and funds spent on running the Negev facility would be better spent providing Africans vocational training so that they might replace the thousands of legal foreign labourers brought into the country yearly to do agricultural, construction and other jobs, often in peripheral parts of the country. This could diffuse tensions between Africans and Israelis in areas such as south Tel Aviv. Jobs and training would serve the Africans and their countries well, once they can finally return home.

To paraphrase the title of Irving Abella and Harold Troper's book on Canadian immigration policy for Jews in the 1930s, none is too many is simply unacceptable. ■

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The essence of Sukkot

CAROLINE LAGNADO
NEW YORK

Just in time for Sukkot, a new small-batch international perfume concern called Arquiste is featuring two festival-appropriate fragrances in its debut roster: L'Etrog and L'Etrog Acqua.

Started by architect-turned-perfumer Carlos Huber, each Arquiste fragrance is a well-researched curated "time capsule," combining history and perfume.

"The first time I ever came across an etrog was at my Jewish primary school. The strength of the fragrance is memorable," recalls Huber, who grew up in northwest Mexico City and attended Jewish schools until college. His family had emigrated from the Pale of Settlement and Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, and is still active in the Jewish community in Mexico City.

"When the holiday of Sukkot came, we were taught the meaning of the Four Species. They consist of a bouquet of date palm, myrtle, willow and the etrog, bound to bless the people gathered for the holiday."

Recalling his day school education, he continues, "Their significance relies on the individual meaning of each 'species,' they symbolize different types of people, good and bad, educated and not, and also different parts of the human body (the etrog is the 'heart'). By binding them together, all types of people are represented and blessed by God."

"It is a nice metaphor and beautiful lesson," he says.

According to the company, its fragrances are formulated to "transport" wearers to "experience history in a most intimate way."

With L'Etrog, for instance, Arquiste intends to transport the wearer to a family harvest celebration in medieval Calabria in the year 1175, with fragrance notes including Calabrese Cedrat, myrtle, Smyrna dates, and Vetivert.

The fragrance is not overpoweringly lemony, with a hint of etrog. It is sweet with some floral overtones, reminiscent of the impression left on the lining inside an etrog box after Sukkot.

L'Etrog Acqua, is a sequel in the storyline of L'Etrog, placing the consumer at the morning after the family party. "L'Etrog Acqua opens up like the first rays of sun in a misty morning," reads the descriptive text of its notes. It contains Sicilian lemon, Italian mandarin, Petitgrain Citronnier, bergamot, Mediterranean lavender, labdanum, and cedar wood. Crisp citrus scents underscore its softer elements.

L'Etrog is a well-researched curated 'time capsule.'

Huber moved to New York in 2006 to attend graduate school at Columbia and pursue a career in historical preservation. He then decided to shift gears and study perfume, maintaining an interest in preserving history via fragrance.

To prepare his debut collection, Huber studied with perfumer Rodrigo Flores-Roux, visited inspirational sites, and researched the stories behind the perfumes in libraries and archives in addition to meeting with botanists, historians and chefs. He was awarded a Rising Star Award from Fashion Group International in 2013.

Arquiste has had an auspicious start, engaging in high-profile collaborations with J.Crew and the French candle maker Cire Trudon.

Huber sees parallels between his past and present avocations.

"There are many similarities in the processes of architecture and perfume – for example developing the 'structure' of a scent and directing the production of the actual creation. Researching the historical background on which I base each fragrance is in a sense the same foundation work of research that one needs in architecture and conservation."

In addition to fanciful descriptions, the Arquiste website presents a historical context for the perfumes (including bibliographic references), detailing how the Jews of Calabria turned to agriculture in the 12th century following the First Crusade, and how the etrog harvest has been a regional tradition ever since.

Smelling like heaven doesn't come cheaply, however. L'Etrog costs $165 for a 55-millilitre bottle while a 100-millilitre bottle of L'Etrog Acqua is $190. ■

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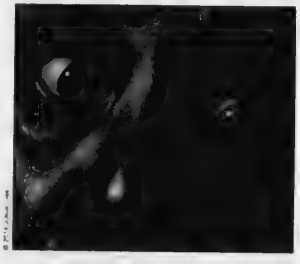

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Chemo treatments at night?

LINDA GRADSTEIN
REHOVOT, ISRAEL

Cancer scientists have long been interested in how and why tumours grow and spread. Now a group at the Weizmann Institute of Science has found that tumours might grow more quickly during the night, meaning that it might be more efficient to give chemotherapy at night rather than during the day.

"It could mean that some treatments should be done during the night," Yehoshua Enuka, one of the authors of the report told the *Media Line*. "It could also lead to a better understanding of the exact biological and molecular mechanism that governs the process of tumour progression."

The findings, which were published in *Nature Communications*, were done on gastric tumours in mice, and the experiment has not been tried on human subjects. In the case of the mice, which are more active during the night and sleep during the day, the tumours grew more quickly during the day. The hypothesis is that in the case of people, the tumours will grow faster at night. It would therefore be more effective to give chemotherapy at night.

Non-scientists might question how much validity a study on mice could have on human cancer, but scientists say humans are more similar to mice than we might think.

"There's a concept of a model organism in biology," Don Katcoff of the Faculty of Life Sciences at Bar Ilan University said. "The physiology is similar and many of the same rules apply."

He also said the findings that were published do seem to be breaking new ground.

"They found that the tumours became smaller if chemotherapy was given to the mice during the daytime, which is equivalent to our night," he said. "They found that the difference was statistically significant, but there is a conglomerate of factors that go into deciding how much chemotherapy to give and what kinds of compounds to use."

He suggested it's likely that a similar trial will be conducted with people to see if the findings are replicated.

Dr. Matia Lauriola of Bologna University in Italy, the primary author of the paper, said the new findings have to do with the interaction between tumour growth and the hormone receptor factor. The receptors are protein molecules found either on a cell's surface or within cells. The research focused on two specific receptors – the epidermal growth factor receptor, EGFR, helps cells, including cancer cells, grow and migrate. The second receptor binds to a steroid hormone called a glucocorticoid (GC), similar to cortisol. This is often called the "stress hormone" because its levels rise in stressful situations.

"Nobody looked at the interaction between different factors in these cases," Lauriola said. "We are the first to look at these interactions and we think it is important for the understanding of the mechanism that has been important for tumour growth."

The scientists gave a breast cancer drug, Lapatinib, to mice with cancer. The drug is meant to inhibit EGFR, to prevent the growth of the cancer cells. They were more effective during the day, when the mice were sleeping, than at night.

Yehoshua Enuka of the Weizmann Institute said the research could help scientists understand how tumours grow.

"It sheds new light on tumour progression," he said. "If we know it progresses more at night, we know there are different biological mechanisms that are more prevalent during the night. The cortisol seems to block the biological processes that enhance the tumour." ■

The Media Line
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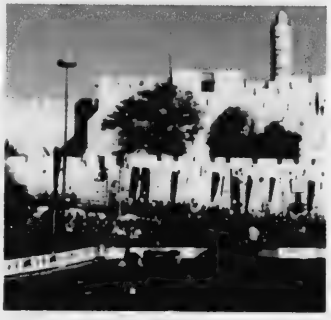

Racing for peace

Backdropped by the Tower of David, a Ferrari Formula One racing car drives in the Old City of Jerusalem during a performance on Oct. 6 as part of the Peace Road Show event aimed at highlighting peace and coexistence.

NATI SHOHAT/FLASH90 PHOTO

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Jewish Life

A poet, a painter and a singer

Sarah Teitel, above, her album cover, left, and samples of her art work.

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Surrounded by her vibrant paintings, the multi-talented Sarah Teitel recently serenaded her guests with songs from her new album at an art gallery in Toronto's Leslieville district.

Accompanied by guitarist Andrew Frost, Teitel performed five songs at the album's launch party, four of her own and a Welsh folk song. She delighted the audience at the Project Gallery on Queen Street East with the purity of her voice and her warmth. At the end of the short set, she thanked the 40 or so guests for attending. One audience member replied, "Thank you for sharing your beautiful voice."

Teitel wrote seven of the eight songs on her new album, *Who Are You Holding*. They include *Even So*, an amusing anti-love song (Beware of my kisses/ Beware of my vows/ There's a dagger I keep up the sleeve of my blouse); *Parts of the Tree*, a country-flavoured love song whose subject is a gnarled, old tree at Coxwell Avenue and Gerrard Street in the city's east end, and *Let Me Be*, a sad tribute to a failed relationship.

When Teitel first heard her new album in its entirety, she wrote in her blog: "I was going to discuss my thoughts and feelings only insofar as they pertained to larger issues. No such luck." She said that she wrote the songs individually and toward the end of the process she became aware of what connected them.

"I realized each song was representative of a different aspect of me. They are different voices I have and masks I wear and they are all true – even when these aspects are at odds with each other."

The album's title, *Who Are You Holding*, comes from the chorus of one of the tracks, *Masks to the Core*, in which she sings, "You won't catch me wearing the same face twice."

Teitel is an accomplished poet who knows how to paint clear pictures with words. She's published a chapbook of poetry called *I Don't Think I Need to Tell You*. Language and music are closely connected in her mind when she's writing songs. "I hear melodies in words," she said. Teitel has released two previous CDs that were recorded in home studios, but *Who Are You Holding* is the first recording she's made in a professional studio with first-rate musicians supporting her.

The players on the album include Rafi Altounian and Frost on guitar, Calum Macleod on bass, Andrew Rasmus on percussion and Andrea Tynec on violin. Altounian is responsible for the excellent arrangements of Teitel's songs.

"The most amazing thing [for me] is to hear the songs being played by professional, skilful, sensitive musicians. I can finally hear what I heard in my head," Teitel said.

Teitel, who's in her mid-30s, was raised in Richmond Hill, Ont., and attended Leo Baeck Day School. She trained as an actor at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where she began writing songs. At school, she had a charismatic teacher who influenced her, and as a gift for the teacher, she wrote songs – her first songs – for a musical production of *Oedipus Rex*.

After finishing university, Teitel spent a couple of years auditioning for parts, but eventually gave up on acting. "I loved acting when the material moved me, but as an actor, you don't get to choose the material," she said. Serendipitously, around that time, she was moving into a new apartment and a neighbour with a home studio saw her carrying her guitar in. He invited her to record with him, which culminated in her first CD in 2005, *Stories and Music for the Mildly Suicidal*. Another recording, *On the Wing*, followed in 2007.

Teitel said visual art has also been a huge part of her life. She started painting seriously when she was in her early 20s and had her first solo show, *Brain Paintings*, in 2012. The series was made up of works that incorporated brain images with architectural elements and cultural symbols. Her Project Gallery show, which closed on Oct. 1, was her second solo outing.

The colourful series of paintings complement her new CD. A painting of two separate faces, one serene and one panicky, is used for the album cover, and other works adorn the CD itself. In keeping with the album's exploration of "relationality and the multiplicity of the self," almost all of the pieces in the show include several faces and sometimes "you can't tell where one face begins and another ends," Teitel said. ■

To view Teitel's artwork and to order her CD, visit www.sarahteitel.ca. You can download the songs on iTunes.

First novel looks at world of matchmaking

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

This book review column doesn't generally deal with young adult fiction. But I am pleased to recommend Suri Rosen's first novel, *Playing With Matches*.

The novel is told in the first-person voice of a 16-year-old girl, Raina Resnick, who lives in Thornhill (where Rosen lives) and attends an Orthodox girls' high school in Toronto (which sounds a lot like the school where Rosen was first a student and later a teacher, before she embarked on other careers in arts and media.)

Raina is a fetching character who vacillates between brash self-confidence, occasional immaturity, and deep self-doubts, as befits a 16-year-old. She is underperforming at school, since she spends too much time on unrelated activities. She is basically a well-intentioned person, even though some of her hare-brained schemes flop dismally and comically.

Raina is the prototypical alienated outsider. She lives far apart from her parents, in the home of a disciplinarian aunt, in a city where she has no friends. She finds her loneliness difficult but overcomes it. The novel is well-paced, and Rosen builds up the reader's sympathy for Raina as the book goes on. I had trouble putting it down when I reached the last 40 pages and even found tears in my eyes as I read the ending.

All of the action takes place in Toronto's modern Orthodox community. In a conversation, Rosen assured me that the book is not a roman à clef. The characters, including Raina, are entirely fictional. The book is certainly not a "teacher novel"; most of the teachers and school administrators in the book do not shine, though none are truly evil, either. In fact, the book has many grey characters, and does not suffer from the common error of painting people black or white.

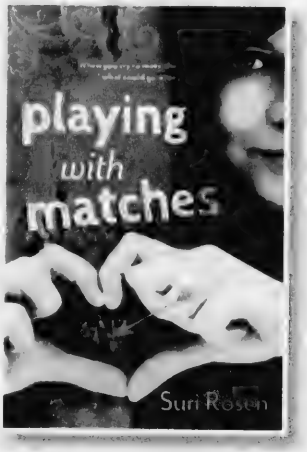
Rosen totally avoids both triumphalist preachiness and snarky critical disdain, two tendencies that often characterize works of fiction set in a religious community. The Orthodox community, just like the people who inhabit it, is neither perfectly good nor insufferably evil; it is simply the setting for the work. It is also the community in which Rosen lives. Her descriptions can thus be humorously on target.

Readers who are not acquainted with the workings of Orthodox communities may be surprised by the complex machinations of the flourishing matchmaking activities in the book. These take place in one rather narrow swath of the Orthodox community. In circles slightly to the left of those that Rosen describes, men and women generally find each other independently or through the help of mutual friends. In circles to the right, parents often play a central role in finding a match for their son or daughter.

In Raina Resnick's world, amateurs who don't really know the man or the woman well match them up and constantly give them pep talks, encouraging them not to give up in their quest for the "right one." The courtships are significantly shorter than in general society and nobody lives together before marriage.

Even readers who find this form of courtship strange can still relate to the book's description of the sadness of the singles scene and the problems of what religious Jews call "the shidduch crisis" – the fact that so many women and men have trouble finding an appropriate long-term match – a problem that affects all segments of Jewish and general society.

Another aspect of this world may also seem oddly old-fashioned – the young age of some of the people in the book who wish to be married. According to the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, "The overall number of young people [in Canada] who are marrying is decreasing and the average age for both men and women when they first marry has been gradually rising. . . . In 1972 the average age of [first marriage was] 23.0 years for women and 25.4 years for men. By 2008, the average age for first marriage . . . was 29.6 years for women and 31.6 years for men."



Playing With Matches
Suri Rosen

(ECW Press)

> *Raina is a fetching character who vacillates between brash self-confidence, occasional immaturity and deep self-doubts*

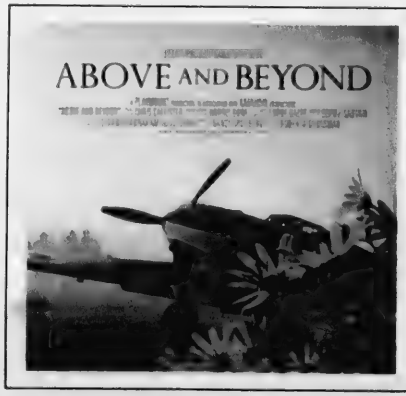
At the same time, according to 2013 statistics, 33 per cent of Canadian first marriages end in divorce. While divorce rates in Orthodox circles are unfortunately rising, they still fall far short of this percentage.

Statistics also prove that, counter-intuitively, long courtships and living together before marriage do not improve the odds of the success of a marriage. In fact, they decrease them. In other words, even if the matchmaking efforts described in *Playing With Matches* seem foreign or unappealing to you, remember that the results of the mating game in general society, judged by long-term stability of marriages, are considerably worse.

While the bulk of the book is about matchmaking, another significant issue that the book addresses is how to apologize. Though only a teenager, Raina Resnick expresses deep insights into the problems involved in making amends and saying that you are sorry. Do people sometimes apologize not because they want to make the offended party feel better but because they want to make themselves feel better? Is there a limit to the number of times that one should apologize?

Issues like these are often discussed in Jewish ethical literature. For example, the modern halachic compendium, *Mishnah Berurah* (chapter 606), citing Rabbi Abraham Gombiner of the 17th century, rules that apologies should not go into detail whenever the person hearing the apology might thus be embarrassed.

If you are looking for a book for a young adult reader, you won't go wrong with *Playing With Matches*. And even for not-so-young adults, *Playing With Matches* is a wholesome, enjoyable, and entertaining read. ■



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Who would have thought that the story behind the creation of the Israeli Air Force is more exciting than anything Hollywood could have imagined? Director Roberta Grossman (*Hava Nagila: The Movie*) honours the Jewish World War II pilots, mostly from America, who volunteered to fight for Israel in the War of Independence and turned the tide of the war, preventing the possible annihilation of Israel at the very moment of its birth. *Above and Beyond* offers a portrait of determined young men as their lives and sense of themselves as Jews gets changed forever. Even Paul Reubens (aka Pee Wee Herman) is on hand to tell the story of his father, whose taste for rugged adventure gets tested in the Israeli desert. An intelligent, funny, and enormously entertaining film featuring an unforgettable cast of characters.

Guest: Director Roberta Grossman

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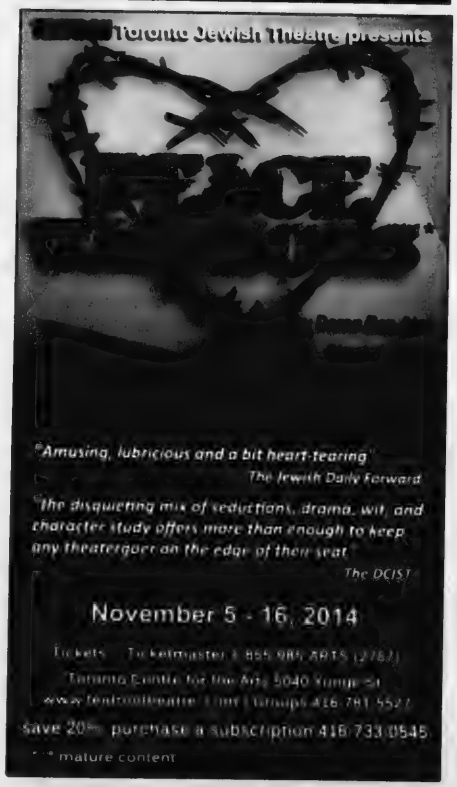
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A Palestinian spy and his Shin Bet agent

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Mosab Hassan Yousef, left, and Gonen Ben Yitzhak

With this summer's war in Gaza still lingering in our memories, it is not surprising that one of the year's most talked-about documentaries is about the relationship between an Israeli Jew and a Palestinian Arab.

How they became allies and friends, though, is part of the twisty, high-stakes intrigue of *The Green Prince*, which won an audience award at the Sundance Film Festival in January. The doc comes out in Toronto and Vancouver on Oct. 17 and should expand to other Canadian cities throughout the fall.

The Palestinian is Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of the top Hamas leader in the West Bank. The Israeli is Gonen Ben Yitzhak, who worked for Israel's internal security agency, Shin Bet.

Ben Yitzhak relied on Yousef to betray his father and become a secret informant for the agency. He wanted Yousef to infiltrate the upper echelons of Hamas so that Israel could stop terrorist attacks.

Yousef initially hesitates to go rogue, remembering the times the Israeli police would harass and arrest his father. As a boy, Yousef would even vow for revenge against an oppressive regime. "To collaborate with Israel is the most shameful thing you can do in my country," Yousef explains.

However, after spending time in prison at the age of 17, which exposed him to the political aims of Hamas, he decided to aid Israel. His Shin Bet codename was the Green Prince.

Shin Bet wanted access to the community around Yousef, as he hung out with Israel's most wanted, including Yasser Arafat. With his proximity to the terror network, Shin Bet could monitor the transactions and terrorist plans of Hamas.

Some in his father's circle tried to persuade Yousef to join Hamas. He refused. However, the Green Prince also feared that Shin Bet would kill his father, and so the agency had to take extra precaution to keep Yousef's family safe and secure.

The relationship was built on trust. Ben Yitzhak sometimes abandoned his Shin Bet post to meet with Yousef – a move that went against the agency protocol – to ensure the Palestinian was keeping true to his mission. There was always the chance that working with the enemy could come back to haunt Ben Yitzhak.

> *What the film lacks in variety, it makes up for with deeply observed humanity*

Director Nadav Schirman's documentary is not elaborately cinematic. Much of *The Green Prince* consists of two talking head interviews, from Yousef and Ben Yitzhak. Filling in the rest is news footages of protests and bombings aftermath, photos of Yousef's extended family and surveillance from Shin Bet's cameras.

The security footage is a saturated night-vision green above the twisty roads and small towns near the West Bank border. Max Richter's sombre score echoes above these images, giving *The Green Prince* a hollow, unnerving feel that builds suspense.

The Green Prince is adapted from Yousef's 2010 memoir *Son of Hamas* but benefits from the gripping, informative to-the-camera address from the subject and his handler.

Some could complain that a sparer approach means *The Green Prince* is not very cinematic, but more worthy of an hour-long documentary on a show like *The Fifth Estate*. However, what the film lacks in variety, it makes up for with deeply observed humanity.

To fill for time, Schirman recreates moments from Yousef's life, such as his time in prison, with other actors. These stylized segments sometimes take Yousef's point of view as he is held against his will, starting to lose his sense of reality. The fragments of his imprisonment, filled with cavernous noises and blurry vision, are hard to forget.

Even those with a more limited knowledge of Israeli-Palestinian relations since the Oslo Accords should find the timeline easy to follow. Schirman structures the film in chapters, so that we can follow the shifting geopolitical atmosphere with clarity.

Last year, two films about Palestinian informants working for Israeli intelligence earned much acclaim: the Israeli film *Bethlehem*, and the Oscar-nominated *Omar*, from Palestine. *The Green Prince* is like a non-fiction version of those thrillers, although it still manages a few surprises near the end.

By creating so much drama solely from the interviews, Schirman ensures we identify with Yousef and Ben Yitzhak more as people than political pawns. Even though the film mostly consists of two men talking to the camera, it is often gripping and always absorbing.■

Filmmaker Daniel Roher lives for adventure

Filmmaker Daniel Roher, centre, works on the set of his film *Bashir's Vision*.

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

For Daniel Roher, 21, the short film format makes sense. His hunger for adventure and his startup company's limited funds, make picking up and travelling to far-off places on a shoestring highly enticing.

"If I was doing a feature, it would take me two years," Roher explained. "In the past year and half, I've made three films in three different places across the globe."

The largely self-taught filmmaker, a native Torontonian who dropped out of the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia, speaks with the confidence of a young person who's achieved sudden success.

"A lot of feature-length documentary films I watch suffer from 'documentary syndrome' – they're just too long. Mine are succinct, engaging, entertaining stories."

Roher founded his company, Loud Roar Productions, in 2011, and has since written, produced and edited four diverse films. *Never Far From Home* features a group of boys going about their lives in a sleepy town in southern Georgia; *Kids of the Rocket Siren* looks at the daily realities of sirens and rocket shelters for kids living in Sderot, Israel; *Resolute* (2014) examines a community in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, and *Bashir's Vision* features a blind Ugandan man who turns to boxing as a refuge from poverty and depression.

Roher's work has been featured in festivals throughout North America. *Kids of the Rocket Siren*, which Roher funded with his bar mitzvah money, was shown at Jewish film festivals in Toronto, San Diego, Atlanta and Los Angeles and won best short documentary at the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival, as well as best short documentary at the International Film Festival of Puerto Rico.

"When we talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it's always these generalities," he said. "I wanted to tell a specific story about actual individuals who are affected. About young kids in Sderot who have grown up with rocket fire as this total normality – that's what was so crazy to me. A car would backfire and I'd be running to a shelter and these kids would be laughing at me."

The fact Roher's films were all shot in wildly different places is no coincidence.

"It's the place that interests me," he said, noting that inspiration usually hits after he's become immersed in a new culture.

For *Resolute*, Roher secured financing from the government of Nunavut, and lived for five weeks with an Inuk family.

"I felt compelled to go up north because, as a Canadian filmmaker, I view it as our wild west, this rugged, unabashed outdoors... I picked a community but didn't know what the story would be."

Though his reception was initially quite hostile, he soon met Zipporah, a 67-year-old community matriarch and survivor of the High Arctic relocation of Inuit people by the Canadian government in the 1950s.

"Sitting in her home felt like sitting in my bubbie's living room in downtown Toronto," Roher recalled. "What set me apart in Zipporah's mind was that I was Jewish... her people had had to wear identification tags... I told her that my people also had numbers, that my grandfather has a number tattooed on his arm. She really responded to that."

Roher is currently working on a new film about the late William Lyon Mackenzie King's work with spiritual mediums.

"I've assembled the best mediums in Ontario, and we want to go to Laurier House in Ottawa and have a séance where we try to interview King."

While Roher acknowledges that his isn't always the most practical way to work, he's reluctant to give up the headiness of it.

"I'm a young person who doesn't have any responsibilities, basically. Because of that, I can do these amazing adventures. I live for that... to go somewhere and really experience the people and the place." ■

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Vancouver filmmaker scores at TIFF

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Aaron L. Gilbert had every reason to be smiling broadly at Toronto's International Film Festival last month. The Burnaby, B.C.-based producer had three film screenings at TIFF: *Welcome To Me*, (starring Kristen Wiig and Tim Robbins); *Kill Me Three Times* (starring Simon Pegg) and *Miss Julie* (starring Jessica Chastain and Collin Ferrell).

"This is one of the top three most prestigious film festivals in the world, rivaling Cannes in terms of its importance to our industry," he says. "Having three there was pretty exciting. It's tough to get in, it's an honour to be there and it's a wonderful launching ground to create awareness of your film."

As a result of their screenings at TIFF, all three of Gilbert's films are closing deals with American distributors and were very well received. *Welcome To Me* will be released in March and the other two are also likely to be on the big screen in the United States and Canada over the next year, Gilbert says.

The 42-year-old from London, Ont. was studying at McMaster University after high school when he had an opportunity to work in the music industry in 1993. That changed his life track and Gilbert found himself moving between Vancouver and Los Angeles doing music management, managing artists and handling the international licensing of music. He credits his passion for the arts to his parents, Gloria and Joseph Gilbert.

"We've always been a family where the arts was important," he reflects. "My parents introduced me and my siblings to theatre and music and gave us an opportunity to see and do a lot of things. My brother and sister are also active in theatre and arts and our love for it comes from the introduction our parents gave us as kids."

Today, Gilbert is managing director of Bron Studios, a Burnaby-based production outfit he co-founded with his wife, Brenda Gilbert, in 2010 and where he wears many different hats.

"Financially, I'm involved in putting the different pieces together for our films and with production partners, but I'm also very involved on all creative elements, such as finding a script, working on it and developing it, and selecting editors, directors of photography, talent agents, managers, casting directors and marketing people," he says.

Bron Studios specializes in live action and animation, and the tremendous talent pool in Vancouver's animation industry makes this an excellent place to be, Gilbert says.

"There's a very mature film and TV industry here, and tremendous incentives for tax and government support for the animation industry in Vancouver. But it's also about quality of life," he adds. "I love the proximity to LA that Vancouver gives me and I often fly into LA for the day. This is as close to LA as I want to be."

It's the kind of career many young people dream about, and with it comes the opportunity to hobnob with the stars. In the last few years Gilbert has worked with Olivia Wilde, Will Ferrell, Helen Hunt, Jennifer Hudson and Julianne Moore among many other Hollywood celebrities.

"I've met such incredible, talented people, and to watch them perform just blows my mind," he admits. "I'm often astonished by how down to earth the actors are and in many cases we become friends. Will Ferrell, for example, is an incredible guy in addition to being crazy talented."

Gilbert is actively working on several projects, one of them based on an original play about the inner workings of a Jewish family. Being Jewish certainly influences his decisions and the kinds of material he's attracted to, he says.

"My parents have always been so active in the Jewish community and that's part of who I am and how I live my life in overall," he reflects. "I'm not in synagogue every Saturday, but I'm Jewish and culturally aware, and I know my roots. I'm definitely attracted to real life stories about how Jews live in our existing world."

Gilbert is also particularly attracted to films containing thematic importance.

Aaron L. Gilbert with actor Zooey Deschanel

"A lot of films I've done cover difficult subject matters in ways that can be accepted by wider audiences," he says. *Welcome To Me* (2014), for example, is about a woman who is bipolar, while *Decoding Annie Parker* (2013) dealt with breast cancer and heredity. "We want to approach difficult subject matters in a way that can be entertaining, but never preachy, to our audiences," he explains.

Recently he partnered with Niv Fichman of Rhombus Media on the psychological drama *Into The Forest*, from Canadian writer/director Patricia Rozema. And in October he was in Shreveport, La. working on *I Saw The Light*, the Hank Williams biopic, in partnership with Brett Ratner. ■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

KITTY WINTROB LAUNCHES NEW EDITION OF *I'M NOT GOING BACK*

Toronto author **Kitty Wintrob** recently penned a new epilogue for her book *I'm Not Going Back: Wartime Memoir of a Child Evacuee*, a second edition of which has been published to mark the 75th anniversary of the start of World War II. The book tells of Wintrob's evacuation as a young girl from London to the British countryside, and her dramatic return. The newly-penned epilogue focuses on her time in London, including the "blitz" and the victory celebration outside Buckingham Palace on VE-Day.

Wintrob talks about her wartime experiences and her husband, **Ralph Wintrob**, reads sections from the book at a Remembrance Day launch. Barbara Frum Library, 20 Covington Rd. Nov. 11, 7 p.m. Free admission, everyone welcome. The publisher is **Bill Gladstone,** who writes this column. www. nowandthenbookstoronto.com.

• • •

Friends of Yiddish: Eugene Orenstein, retired chairman of Jewish Studies at McGill University, gives a talk in Yiddish on the history of the Montreal Jewish Public Library to mark the library's 100th anniversary. Sponsored by Friends of Yiddish and the Committee for Yiddish of UJA Federation, the lecture will focus particularly on the vibrant, often tumultuous years around the start of World War I. Room 221, Donald Gales Family Pavilion, Prosserman JCC, 4588 Bathurst St. Oct. 19, 2 p.m. Everyone welcome, admission free.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• In "Kevin Courrier Spins the Beatles," an eight-part series of musical lectures with film clips, lecturer **Kevin Courrier** examines how the **Beatles'** music created both dreams and nightmares in their pursuit of an artificial paradise, "Nowhere Land," built on the principles of pleasure and fulfillment. The lectures are based on the 2009 book, *Artificial Paradise: The Dark Side of the Beatles' Utopian Dream*. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. at Bloor. Mondays, Oct. 20 to Dec. 8, 7 to 9 p.m. $90 for eight lectures; drop-in $12 ($6 for students). www.mnjcc.org

• The Koffler Centre and the International Festival of Authors present authors **Shelly Oria** and **Alison Pick** in conversation with **Cynthia Good**. Studio Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. Oct. 26, 2 p.m. $18, $15. www.ifoa.org

• Book launch of *Living Legacies -- A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women (IV)*, with editor **Liz Pearl**. Miles Nadal JCC, Oct. 30, 10:30 to 12:30 p.m.

• Actor-comedian **Jack Newman** presents *The Yiddish Theatre of Moscow and Second Avenue*, a behind-the-scenes tour of **Marc Chagall's** stunning sets, **Solomon Mikhoels'** brilliant *Lear* and the escapades of **Boris Thomashevky** and **Zypora Spaisman**. Miles Nadal JCC, Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m. (doors open 1 p.m.) Drop-in $4.

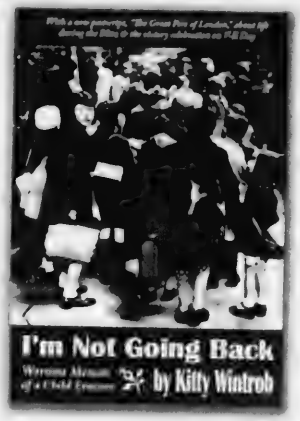
• Musicians **Micah Barnes, Bill Newton-Davis, Tyrone Gabriel** and **Gavin Hope** perform *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, a concert to benefit the Miles Nadal JCC music scholarship fund. One night only, $50. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday Nov. 13, 8 p.m. U. of T. Box Office, 416-978-8849. www.uofttix.ca

•Submission deadline for the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards is Feb. 2, 2015. The 2014 awards will be presented in summer 2015, with winning titles announced in May 2015.

• • •

At the Galleries

• "The Commissioned Works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele – Jewish Art Patrons of Vienna," a two-part series of lectures by art history teacher **Osnat Lippa**, focuses on the powerful Jewish families



in turn-of-the-century Vienna who commissioned iconic works that were later confiscated by the Nazis. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays Oct. 20 and 27, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Series $25, drop-in $14. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Artist **Leon Kushner** participates in *Rhapsody in Colours and Forms*, a group exhibition by the **Hungarian Visual Artists of Canada**. Todmorden Mills Gallery, 67 Pottery Rd., Oct. 22 to Nov. 2. Opening reception, Oct. 25, 1 to 4 p.m. with **Dr. Stefania Szabo,** consul general of Hungary; live music, refreshments. www.huvac.ca ■

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What's New

OCT. 15- OCT. 23

by Lila Sarick

Thursday 16	Friday		Monday 20	Tuesday 21	Wednesday 22
Shemini Atzeret	Simchat Torah				Lots to learn about today: Jacob's Ladder, human trafficking and genealogy.

Saturday, Oct. 18

TORAH LECTURE
Allen Cooper leads the discussion on this week's Torah reading at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Sunday, Oct. 19

YIDDISH CLASSES
All levels of Yiddish classes are offered starting today, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd. Call **Ed** 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

BELLA AND MARC CHAGALL
Cantor Katie Oringel presents an abridged version of her show *A polyphonic canvas: Jewish music and the art of Chagall* and a peek at the upcoming show *Bella: The colour of love*, Temple Sinai, 10:15 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 20

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El begins its fall lecture series, with **Nelson Wiseman** discussing, "Is Canada a failed democracy?" Series runs until Nov. 17. All lectures at 2 p.m. $45 /series, $12/ lecture, 416-449-3880.

INNOVATIONS & DISCOVERIES
Dr. Sergio Peisajovich discusses "Innovations and new discoveries," in partnership with the Weizmann Institute, 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

LOST SYNAGOGUES OF POLAND
Marc Epstein, Vassar College, discusses the beautiful, but now destroyed painted wooden synagogues of Poland, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

Deadline Reminder:
Deadlines will change because of the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 30 is Oct. 20. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Bar mitzvah flowers

Boys from Chabad of Markham's 2013-14 bar mitzvah club planted 600 daffodils Sept. 17 as a living Holocaust memorial. Pictured, from left, are Dylan Weltman, Aaron Kibel, Daniel Azbel, Hillel Ruskin, Matthew Kibel, Daniel Rosin, Rabbi Yossi Berktin and Adam Schwabacher. The club regularly meets with Rabbi Berktin as part of the boys' requirements for their bar mitzvah.

Tuesday, Oct. 21

LUNCH AND LEARN
Ellie Tesher discusses "Sex and sexuality," 12:15 p.m., as part of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's Lunch and Learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352 or email mandy@bethtikvahtoronto.org

DAYTIME SPEAKER SERIES
Crime novelist **Robert Rotenberg** speaks at Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m.

HESCHEL OPEN HOUSE
Toronto Heschel School, 819 Sheppard Ave. W., holds an open house, 9 a.m. RSVP 416-635-1876, ext. 334 or admissions@torontoheschel.org.

HEBREW CLASSES
Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for adults: beginners plus starts tonight at 7:30, intermediates Oct. 23. 416-487-3281.

Wednesday, Oct. 22

JACOB'S LADDER
Ellen Schwartz, founder of Jacob's Ladder, the Canadian Foundation for the Control of Neurodegenerative Disease, speaks at Beth Emeth Synagogue as part of the Women's Lives Series, 7:30 p.m. $20.

FINANCIAL PLANING FOR DISABLED
Learn about the financial tools available to families of a loved one with a developmental disability, 7 p.m., Reena Foundation, 927 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Call 905-764-1081, ext. 30 to register.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING
National Council of Jewish Women shows the film *The Whistleblower* about human trafficking, 6:30 p.m., North York Library, 5120 Yonge St. RSVP 416-633-5100. $10.

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Fiona Gold Kroll discusses "A stone for Benjamin: My genealogical search for my great-uncle," Temple Sinai, 8 p.m.

SONG OF SONGS
Hana Werner discusses "Song of Songs: the erotic and transformative," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. $60 for 10 sessions, $10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Thursday, Oct. 23

GREAT SONGS OF THE '60S
Musicologist **Mike Daley** discusses "Great songs of the 1960s folk revival," Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m. $8.

JEWISH-ITALIAN MUSIC
The Israeli vocal ensemble **Profeti della Quinta** performs Jewish-Italian madrigals and compositions by Salomone Rossi, Holy Blossom Temple, 7:30 p.m. $36/$18. 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

HUMANITARIAN AWARD
MP Jason Kenney, minister of employment and social development, is honoured by Beth Sholom Synagogue, 6 p.m. RSVP **Rivy** 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

ADDICTION RECOVERY & MYTHS
Former attorney general **Michael Bryant** discusses addiction and mental health, Temple Sinai, 7 p.m. 416-487-3281. $7/$10.

COMING EVENTS

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

RICHARD KEMP
Col. Richard Kemp, a former commander of British troops in Afghanistan,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

discusses "Israel, Gaza, morality and a complicit press," **Oct. 27**, 7:30 p.m. at the Eglinton Grand Theatre, 400 Eglinton Ave. W. Go to www.bethsholom.net to register.

MEKOROT CLASSES

Rabbi Noah Sonenberg begins a year-long class studying Talmud Kiddushin, Sundays starting **Oct. 26**, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. **Rifka Sonenberg** teaches a 5-week class on the positive commandments of Shabbat, starting **Oct. 29**, Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 1:30 p.m. wwww.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Widows/widowers over 65: A 6-session group for men and women over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts Oct. 21, 11 a.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 1700 Bathurst St.
- Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Oct. 22, 2 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave., or Oct. 23, Lipa Green Centre, 7 p.m.
- Changing your ADHDitude, Living with adult ADHD: A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and want to learn skills to create positive change in their lives. Starts Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, Oct. 29, 9:30 a.m., Lebovic Jewish Community Campus, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Walk a mile in my shoes: A workshop for parents and professionals wanting to understand more about learning disabilities in children and teens, Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Spousal Caregiver Group** for adults over 55 caring for a spouse with dementia or physical illness meets for 6 weeks starting Oct. 20 at Bathurst-Finch Hub. Sponsored by Circle of Care and Family Caregivers Connections. Call **Tessa Wassyng**, 905-738-1128, ext. 323.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park** (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Couples dance Oct. 19, 7 p.m. Tuesdays, balance and co-ordination class, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Sharoni Sibony** discusses "100 years of the First Narayever Congregation," Oct. 23. Doors open 1 p.m.; program starts 1:30 p.m. $4.

Liz Pearl reads from her new book *Living Legacies: A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Jewish Women (IV)*, Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and stay for **Jack Newman's** discussion of "The Yiddish theatre of Moscow and Second Avenue," at 1:30 p.m. Doors open at 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 19, **Francine Hallman** performs jazz and contemporary music, 1:30 p.m., Oct. 21, **Kitty Wintrob** discusses "I'm not going back: Wartime memoir of a child evacuee," 10 a.m.; Oct. 22, lecture on "Elder abuse- don't become a victim," 1:30 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- JCC Daycare and preschool has limited nursery, JK and SK spaces for this year. Open house Oct. 22, 10 a.m. Call **Kailah,** ext. 4351 to book a tour.
- Free spin courses for this month, Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon.
- PJ Plus, a parent and child (ages 18 months to 3 years) program of active Jewish learning runs Oct. 19-Dec. 21.
- Enjoy Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30 p.m.
- Cantorial soloist **Rachel Shubert** presents a workshop on music and well-being, Nov. 18, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents "The Jews of Old Toronto," Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What is a Jewish film?" Nov. 5-26, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation* is at the gallery until Oct. 30.
- Tickets on sale now for *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *My Mexican Shiva*, Oct. 19, 4 and 7 p.m., with guest speaker **Debbie Gaysinsky.** $15/$10, box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- PJ Plus a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children, starts Oct. 19. Children 18-30 months at 2 p.m.; 2 1/2 to 3 years at 3:30 p.m.
- Hebrew Institute starts the week of Oct. 20. For info and placement tests, anniemg@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, Oct. 20 and 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Sign up for beginner Yiddish. Starts Oct. 23, 7-9 p.m.
- Got Shabbat? Presented with PJ Library, Oct. 24- Dec. 19, Shabbat family party for children up to 4 with caregivers, 10 a.m.; Shabbat club, drop-off program for children 3-5 at 12:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Artificial paradise: The dark side of the Beatles' utopian dream," Oct. 20-Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
- Harmonia: Downtown Jewish Youth Choir meets Sundays 4-6 p.m., starting Oct. 19. Conducted by **Yonah Sienna.** harmonia@mnjcc.org.
- JCC Fitness: MELT and Pilates Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.; MELT Method-Full body for joint pain and injury management, Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- **Steve Rose** teaches an art course, "What would Kandinsky do?" Oct. 23-Dec. 18, 1 p.m.
- See *Cabaret* at the Shaw Festival, Oct. 26.
- **Joan Lowenstein** teaches watercolour printmaking, for adults and children, Oct. 21-Nov. 11.
- PJ Plus, a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children runs Oct. 19- Dec. 21.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches Fundamentals of drawing and painting, Nov. 19-Dec. 10, 10 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents, "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," an examination of how films soaked up political and cultural attitudes, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2014

Ask Ella: Personality quirks or disorders?

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

My mother is driving me crazy. She's a worrier. She checks in with me a minimum of five times a day. Did the kids come home from school? Did they eat enough? If, God forbid, someone has a cold, it's like the world has come to an end. A trip turns into a nightmare if the plane is delayed. She goes into a frenzy and sometimes when I land there can be 50 missed calls on my cell.

I love her dearly but as she gets older this problem is getting worse. I find myself avoiding her calls and lying to her all the time. Any suggestions?

Can't Handle the Concern

Dear Can't Handle the Concern,

Most people worry a little or when there is a real reason, like the illness of a loved one, or even something as simple as an exam or doctor's appointment. But sometimes this behaviour can escalate to the point that it affects not only the worrier's life, but everyone around them as well. That's when normal worrying becomes a chronic disorder.

It sounds like your mom's worrying has crossed that line. You are correct. As she ages, if she is not given coping strategies or ways to deal, it will only get worse and you will be the natural recipient.

First, is she aware? Have you had the discussion that her worrying is past the point of normal and it is affecting your life and especially her life? She has to be open to getting help if any of the following suggestions are going to work.

Some people are just predisposed to being more anxious and have to work harder at letting things go and learning how to enjoy life. You can start off by trying simple things, like getting your mom into some kind of meditation group, yoga or exercise program. Staying active, and learning to breath and relax along with eating right are a good start.

If her anxiety disorder is full blown though, you will need to get medical intervention. This step will be especially important if you can't get her to see that there is a problem. Perhaps if she hears the truth from a medical professional she will take it more seriously.

With your input, and after speaking with your mom directly, a trained professional can diagnose if this is something that can be controlled with lifestyle changes or if medication is needed. A combination of both may help.

One thing you know for sure, is for your own sanity, you can't let this go on. This behaviour affects day-to-day living for all who love and care about her. Everyone has a breaking point and you need to get your mom help, before you reach yours.

Dear Ella,

My boyfriend has no passion. He is smart, handsome and very good to me, but he never gets passionate about anything. He's the ultimate fence-sitter, never takes a side in a political discussion, doesn't feel passionate about music, cars, books, hobbies, food or any other pastime. He can pretty much take or leave anything. It's like he has a pre-programmed robotic mind to never show emotion. What is that?

Feel Like Shaking Him

Dear Feel Like Shaking Him,

It would be interesting to know what your boyfriend does for a living? My guess is he's a numbers guy dealing with logic. That's not to say that all logical financial people lack emotion, but they are more concrete-sequential thinkers.

Your description is different though. He sounds like he is apathetic, perhaps lacks motivation, maybe has a fear of losing control or is possibly depressed. A lack of passion may be a warning sign. First he needs to rule out any physiological reasons. If there is nothing physically wrong, then you can move on, if he is willing to talk with a therapist who specializes in this type of behaviour.

It's hard to say what's "normal" as everyone is different, but it's a little sad to have no passion about anything and that can't make for a great relationship or life. The sooner he gets to the bottom of why he doesn't seem to care about anything, the sooner he can move on and see life in full colour instead of grey. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Family Moments

Congratulations Joseph & Esther Hayeems on your 45th wedding anniversary! Love, your children and grandchildren. Mazel tov.

Robin & Jerrold Lerman, Wendy & Alan Berger announce the engagement of Courtney & Lee. Proud grandparents Julie Berger and Sydney Mandel.

Ashley & Evan Dalgorf announce the birth of Talia Eve Aug. 20. Grandparents, Robin & Jerrold Lerman, Barbara & Shawn Dalgorf, great-grandparents Lyle & Dave Cappe.

Shirley & Louis Baum announce the birth of grandson Noah Jackson. Parents, Marisa & Jeff Baum, brother, Benjamin and uncles, aunts and cousins.

Happy 90th birthday, Oct. 24, Pearl Paskell (née Klinger). With all our love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, xoxo

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

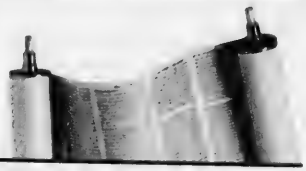
Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Moshe & Shauna Fishweicher are pleased to announce the birth of a baby boy named Zachary Jacob Fishweicher on Sept. 21.

Parshah

Bereshit | Genesis 1:1 - 6:8



Rabbi Ilan Acoca explains why when we finish reading the Torah we start again at the beginning
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl says natural phenomena are an affirmation of divine possibility
Rabbi Catharine Clark argues no matter how often you read the Torah, it always seems new

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

In a few days, we will be concluding the Torah reading cycle and starting it again. The Torah concludes with the blessing Moses gave the Jewish nation before his passing and starts with Bereshit, which speaks about the Creation of the world.

I often wonder about the correlation between the end and the beginning of the Pentateuch, and a recent painful experience gave me a new understanding of the connection.

My uncle, Elias Acoca z"l, passed away recently in Montreal. I was extremely close to my uncle and had the difficult mission of officiating at his funeral and eulogizing him. I had never done this for a family member before.

As I was thinking of my uncle, who taught me many important lessons, I thought about his past. My uncle was born in Morocco, which was a beacon of Jewish life. He often spoke about it and emphasized how important it is not to forget where we came from, our ancestry, traditions and culture.

My uncle imbued me with this lesson, one that I constantly think about.

During my stay in Montreal, my cousin offered me a few Talmud volumes that belonged to my grandfather. Tears rolled down my eyes as my cousin handed me those volumes. I understood that I have to continue living the past of my ancestors and perpetuate it with the future generations.

Moses also leaves Am Yisrael with this message. He has a vision that the Jewish People will be going into exile. They will be persecuted, uprooted from their countries, their culture and their traditions. Therefore, he blesses them by telling them not to forget their illustrious past.

That is why when we get to the end of the Torah, we immediately start reading it from the beginning. It bonds us to our past and gives us hope for our future.

May the memory of my uncle always live. Amen. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

As the holiday season draws to a close, the festival of Shmini Atzeret (with its partner, Simchat Torah) emphasizes a particular closeness to God, provides an opportunity for personal memorialization (*Yizkor*), celebrates the renewal of the annual Torah reading cycle and marks a transition into the rainy winter season of Israel.

The Torah tells us: "On the *shmini* – the eighth day – you shall have a holy assembly and you shall bring a fire-offering to the Eternal. It is an *atzeret* – a convocation – for you" (Leviticus 23.36). The rabbis of the Talmud took the name Shmini Atzeret from two of the words in this verse, and the day came to have a dual quality: it was associated with the prior celebration of Sukkot as well as having its own name and status. Over time, Shmini Atzeret developed its own set of traditions.

On that day, the prayer leader recites a special *piyyut*, a poem, announcing a change of language in the second blessing of the *Amidah* (*gevurot*). Coinciding with the rainy season in Israel, our prayers will now refer to the One who "causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall."

Natural phenomena become for us a theological affirmation of divine possibility. This *piyyut*-prayer also challenges us to be conscious of our environment and of our role in safeguarding the world around us. Additionally, for centuries, wherever Jews lived, the invocation of *geshem*, rain, asserted that even when we were in the "far reach of the West," our hearts were concerned with the welfare of Eretz Yisrael.

Take a few moments during this season to walk outdoors, to feel the change of weather, to marvel at the changing colours, to be grateful for life. ■

Follow me at www.beth-tzedec.org and https://www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

Every summer, my family and I take a vacation to the Jersey Shore, home of the world's classiest T-shirts. A couple of years ago the must-have T-shirt said: Cool Story Babe (Now Go Make Me A Sandwich).

As we celebrate Simchat Torah, it is hard to imagine a T-shirt more antithetical to Judaism. The message of the T-shirt is: "Your tired stories are boring me." The message of Simchat Torah is: "Share your story with me again and again."

On Simchat Torah morning, as soon as we finish reading the Torah, we will roll back to the beginning and start reading it again. We will do so with a sense of both celebration and seriousness, grateful for the wisdom of the Torah.

Even though many of us have heard the entire Torah read many times over the course of our lives, it always offers a fresh insight. Take Bereshit, for instance, the parshah we will read this Shabbat. At every age, the Torah has something new for us. As children, we focus on how the animals got their names. As pre-teens, we giggle at the idea that Adam and Eve did not realize they were naked. As university graduates, struggling through our first attempts at making it on our own, we connect with the loss felt upon eviction from paradise. As new mothers, we know all too well that Eve is cursed to give birth in pain.

In every time also, Torah has something new for us. Charles Darwin changed dramatically how we read the account of Creation in Genesis Chapter 1. The dynamic between Eve and her husband will forever be viewed differently through the lens of feminism.

We are blessed to have such a book and to be able to read it again and again. This year, may we never dismiss its lessons in the rush to get to kiddush. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ontario.

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October 23 issue:

Deadline:
Tuesday October 7, 4:00 p.m.

The CJN offices are closed: October 16, 17

Over the rainbow in Kansas City

MICHAEL STAVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When I first heard of the Steamboat Arabia, I didn't think much of it. Many ships sank in American rivers over the last couple of centuries, and I thought Arabia would be no different. After hearing that the largest collection of pre-Civil War American artifacts outside the Smithsonian were found in its hull, I began to take notice.

While carrying 200 tons of supplies up the Missouri river from St. Louis, Mo., the Arabia sank in 1857 near present day Kansas City. Quickly covered by mud and silt, it sat forgotten until the mid-1980s, when a team of private treasure hunters located the wreckage under a nearby farmer's field. Since the boundaries of the river had shifted over the years, heavy digging equipment was needed to extract the vessel from the nearly 50 feet of topsoil covering the ship.

In a herculean effort that continues to this day, excavators brought to the surface a cross section of artifacts related to 19th century American life. The staggering collection includes tens of thousands of items, including edible food!

Perfectly preserved in the cold, zero-oxygen hull for 130 years, animal-based products, such as leather and felt, as well as inorganic materials remained fully intact. After quickly deep-freezing the cargo, excavators have spent the last 25 years slowly drying and preserving the contents utilizing a process perfected by the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa.

The Steamboat Arabia museum is, however, just one of many impressive locales in Kansas City.

Divided between two states, Kansas and Missouri, Kansas City's charming metropolitan area sparkles from over 400 municipal fountains that dot the landscape, second in number only to Rome, Italy. The fountains provide cooling relief to an area that regularly exceeds 40C during the summer.

From the legendary 18th & Vine R&B clubs (made famous by Fats Domino in his 1959 hit *Kansas City, Here I Come*), to the stately Raphael Hotel overlooking the Country Club Plaza area lined with Spanish style buildings, Kansas City surprises many with its impressive scenery.

The city is also home to the National World War I memorial and museum. Walking into the building, visitors walk through a re-created field of red poppies, an ode to Canadian John McCrae's legendary poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

Within the museum, the exhibits focus on the events leading up to World War I, and later, the U.S. involvement towards the end of the war. Numerous exhibits detail the heroism of Canadian troops during the bloody conflict.

Centred primarily in the pastoral suburb of Overland Park, Kansas City's Jewish life remains vibrant, despite recent events that might have crippled communities in other cities. Earlier this year, neo-Nazi F. Glenn Miller murdered two people in the parking lot of the local JCC and a third in front of a Jewish retirement home.

Rabbi Binyomin Mazer, mashgiach at Village Shalom Retirement Home, had always found Kansas City a safe community. Residing in Overland Park since 2005, Mazer wasn't working that fateful Sunday in April when Miller opened fire. "For a month following the shootings, the community was in an emotional void," said Mazer.

While not a resident of the retirement home, 94-year-old Irene Wurtzberger knew many people who reside there.

After surviving the Holocaust and making it to New York in 1945, Wurtzberger shortly thereafter informed her family she was moving to Kansas City. Her father emphatically replied, "Why would you go there? That's where coyotes live!"

But Wurtzberger was not to be deterred. During the 1940s, Kansas City's wide-open spaces, available housing and booming economy lured many Jews to the city. Wurtzberger, who died shortly after our visit, resided in a small cottage on the property of Beth Israel Abraham and Voliner, Kansas City's lone Orthodox synagogue.

In the months following the attacks, this community of about 10,000 has come together across the religious spectrum. Increasingly vigilant in the face of anti-Semitism, community leaders tightened security at Jewish institutions, while encouraging members to look after those in need, like Wurtzberger. Today, the sense of *achdut* (unity) within the Kansas City Jewish community is remarkable, something not often found in other cities. ■

The Kansas City skyline, top. Above left and middle, items recovered from the Arabia. Right, the sign hanging above Kansas City's legendary Rhythm & Blues district. MICHAEL STAVSKY PHOTOS

Michael Stavsky acknowledges the assistance of the Kansas City Convention & Visitor's Bureau, and the Raphael Hotel in arranging his family's trip to Kansas City.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2014

Andrew Bennett: Greater religious freedom in Ukraine now

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Andrew Bennett is Canada's first ambassador to the Office of Religious Freedom, established in 2013 by the Conservative government to monitor religious oppression and protect freedom of religion internationally. Bennett met with *The CJN* to discuss the state of religious freedom for Jews and other faith groups in Ukraine since the overthrow of former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych and the ensuing conflict in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

What has been your office's involvement in Ukraine since conflict erupted there last fall?

We'd been fairly active there before things started to develop on the Maidan [the site of the protest against Yanukovych and closer ties with Russia] in Kiev back in November. We had highlighted Ukraine as a country we wanted to focus on, because the previous government, under president Yanukovych, had always favoured only one expression of Christianity – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate – to the exclusion of other Christian churches.

Then, when things started to come off the wheels there, we really got involved. I went to Ukraine at the end of January. The day I arrived in Kiev was the day... the governor of Lviv Oblast [a province in western Ukraine] had resigned. So it was clearly becoming a national issue.

With the fall of president Yanukovych... our office realized the concern was not so much about the normalization of church-state relations... Under the new government, there's been a complete sea change. The new government has chosen to recognize the various churches and religious groups that came together in the Maidan movement. They recognize the authority of the churches, the Tatars and the Jews in Ukraine.

The current concern, then, is addressing the new types of persecution being meted out to different groups by Russian occupying forces in Crimea and by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine.

What are the new types of persecution?

To understand this, it's important for your readers to have a sense of the complex ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine. Essentially, there are four ecclesiastical jurisdictions there: the largest is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate; the second-largest is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Kievan Patriarchate; then the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which is dominant in western Ukraine. (Many Ukrainian Canadians would be Ukrainian Greek Catholic.) And then there's the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which is very small.

Andrew Bennett, Canadian ambassador to the Office of Religious Freedom

> *With Ukraine, since the new government came to power, we've seen an increased openness to dealing with a lot of the issues from the past.*

In eastern Ukraine and Crimea, the Ukrainian Greek Catholics and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kievan Patriarchate have been the specific targets of Russian-backed separatists... We've also seen violence against Crimean Tatars in these regions. This persecution is clearly Russian-led.

We've seen examples of bishops' homes firebombed, of nuns' convents seized, of priests being threatened during services... of priests from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church being kidnapped temporarily as means of intimidation....

Crimean Tatars in Crimea have... had different materials seized, on the charge of religious extremism. The Tatars have always been strongly pro-Ukrainian, because in past, they experienced a lot of unpleasantness under the Russians.

What is the situation like for Ukrainian Jews? Have you seen an escalation in anti-Semitism under the new government?

No, not at all. I mean, there have always been instances of anti-Semitism in Ukraine, as in many parts of eastern and central Europe. But I think Ukraine is doing quite a good job of ensuring greater democracy and freedoms. And the Jewish community... from the time of the protests in the Maidan, was very actively involved with various Christian communities in opposing the government under Yanukoyvch.

Canada has been playing a leading role in the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter [a private, multinational initiative launched in 2008 to promote stronger ties between Ukrainians of Jewish and Christian heritages]... we've reached out to various rabbis in Ukraine. From the information we've gotten from the Jewish community in Ukraine, there's a sense that there is no re-escalation of anti-Semitism, despite Russian propaganda that the new government in Kiev is neo-Nazi and fascist. This [claim] is a lot of nonsense.

I'll be going back to Ukraine in October, and I want to meet with the Jewish community, the Tatars and different churches to see better what is happening... It's important for us to counter the misinformation. The situation between Russia and Ukraine is in many ways a propaganda war.

What are relations like between the Tatars [who are Muslim] and Jews in Ukraine?

I'm not aware of any particular tensions between them, but I haven't really engaged with that dynamic. I can't speak to that specifically.

Did you see any rise in anti-Semitism as a result of Israel's war with Hamas this past summer?

No. Nothing that I've been made aware of.

Compared to other European countries, how anti-Semitic would you say Ukraine is?

It's always hard to say... In addition to my role as ambassador, I'm also head of Canada's delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), so Holocaust remembrance and education is a key component of my mandate.

From both a religious freedoms perspective and a Holocaust remembrance and education perspective, we're particularly concerned about Hungary... about deteriorating relations between the Hungarian government and the Jewish community, specifically in Budapest. Canada raised these concerns most recently at a plenary meeting of IHRA in London in May. We called upon the Hungarian delegation to improve relations with the Jewish community... and to ensure the latter accepts the approach the government takes to Holocaust commemoration. This has not been the case before.

With Ukraine, however, since the new government came to power, we've seen an increased openness to dealing with a lot of the issues from the past. As many of your readers will be aware, the Holocaust in Ukraine was not achieved so much through concentration camps, but through targeted killing sites... There's a group in Ukraine called Yachad in Unum, led by a French Catholic priest, that's been working to map killing sites here and in other places... Also, since the government change, Ukraine has approached IHRA and asked to become a full member.

What will be the nature of your trip to Ukraine in October?

I'll be there for just over a week. My points of focus will be: engaging the government to talk about defence of religious freedoms, engaging different organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, engaging different faith communities including the Jews, and engaging human rights organizations that are active there.

It will be a combination of information-gathering, which helps us develop a robust country strategy... we are in the process of doing that in Ukraine now... and looking at doing targeted programming in the country, to foster dialogue between different religious communities.

We're always open to doing different programs that could engage the Jewish community... Given the openness of the new government to IHRA, I would love to see some programs undertaken by them around helping Ukraine address the question [of how to best commemorate] the killing sites.

We have an annual programming budget of between $4-and $5-million dollars, so we'll be using funds from that to sponsor some projects in Ukraine. My trip will give me a chance to further investigate how to roll those out.

We often have calls for proposals where we directly solicit proposals from people for specific funding, but we're always open to unsolicited proposals as well. If anyone from your readership is working with groups in Ukraine, we're open to hearing from them. ■

The day the music died

Shlomo Carlebach

Backstory

RABBI CHAIM DALFIN

It was an ordinary Brooklyn fall day, Thursday, Oct. 20, 1994, when Rabbi Yosef "Yossel" Wineberg, left his office at 1310 48th St. to buy some lunch. He walked a block away to Weiss's luncheonette near the corner of 47th Street and 13th Avenue. The owner, Meir Weiss, a Hungarian Jew, made *heimish essen*, homestyle Hungarian tasting food, which spoke to the hearts, minds and bellies of many people in Borough Park.

The community had a large population of Orthodox chassidic Jews from Hungary. In those days you could still hear two older women speaking Hungarian between themselves as you passed them in the street.

Weiss's was a popular eatery in the community because Meir was friendly, spoke the common language and understood the mentality. Yossel came into the store and waited on line to order his lunch. There were about 10 others on line in this cramped mom and pop shop.

When Yossel got his lunch and was ready to pay Meir, Shlomo Carlebach walked into the eatery. Shlomo turned to Yossel in his usual warm manner, saying, "Friend, how are you?" He also mentioned that he had just come from Manhattan and was on his way to the airport.

Shlomo then stretched out his hand to Yossel, greeting him in the traditional Jewish manner with Shalom, peace.

Yossel pulled back his hand and did not give it to Shlomo. He said that he was not his friend. People in the store heard this, became nervous, but remained silent.

Shlomo was taken aback and asked Yossel why he did not give him his hand.

Yossel enquired of Shlomo if he really wanted to know the answer.

Shlomo thoughtfully stopped for a moment, and then replied that he indeed wished to know.

Yossel retorted, "You make so many ba'alei tshuvah, help so many non-Orthodox Jews become Orthodox, but one ba'al tshuvah you have not made. Why?"

Shlomo lifted his eyes, becoming lost in thought. After a minute, he said "You are right."

Yossel then took the opportunity to push his point further. He quoted part of a verse from the Prophet Isaiah, "Ein shalom amar Elokei ..." ("There is no peace, says God ... ")

Shlomo knew and understood Yossel's quote well. The last word of the verse, which Yossel did not quote, is "l'rashaim," to the wicked.

Shlomo's face turned white and serious. Yossel, by quoting the verse, had effectively said to Shlomo, "I do not want to shake your hand because you are wicked." Both of them understood Yossel was referring to Shlomo's weakness when it came to women. For many people, this represented an area where Carlebach had diverted from the halachic standard.

Shlomo asked Yossel what he needed to do for him so that he would extend his hand to him in shalom.

Yossel quickly responded that Shlomo needed to do tshuvah, to regret his behaviour, and to accept upon himself to stop doing what he should not be doing.

Shlomo thought again for a moment and asked Yossel: If I do tshuvah, will you give your hand?

Yossel said yes.

Shlomo then asked how he should do tshuvah.

Yossel indicated that it should be done by saying and thinking, right then and there, "I accept upon myself to do tshuvah."

Shlomo became serious once more and then loudly and clearly, in front of everyone in the store, answered, "I accept upon myself."

Yossel then gave Shlomo his hand.

Shlomo took out a business card, wrote his private number on it, and told Yossel, that he was on his way to Toronto, and from there, to Israel. He asked him to call at a later date in order to get together and talk.

Yossel agreed and left the store.

That evening, Yossel returned to his office and noticed his answering machine was blinking. He retrieved the message. It was from a person who was also at Weiss's with Yossel and Shlomo, stating that Shlomo Carlebach had just died.

Yossel was shocked beyond belief. The words "Baruch Dayan Ha'emet," fell from his lips. ■

Adapted from The Real Shlomo, by Rabbi Chaim Dalfin, published by JEP Press, October 2014. For more information, visit www.jewishinfo.org.

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Dershowitz mounts a new defence of Israel

Harvard law prof's latest book argues Jewish state is held to a higher standard. **PAGE 12**

Toronto election features Jewish cameos

QuAIA, community security and Doug Ford's wife make campaign headlines. **PAGE 14**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

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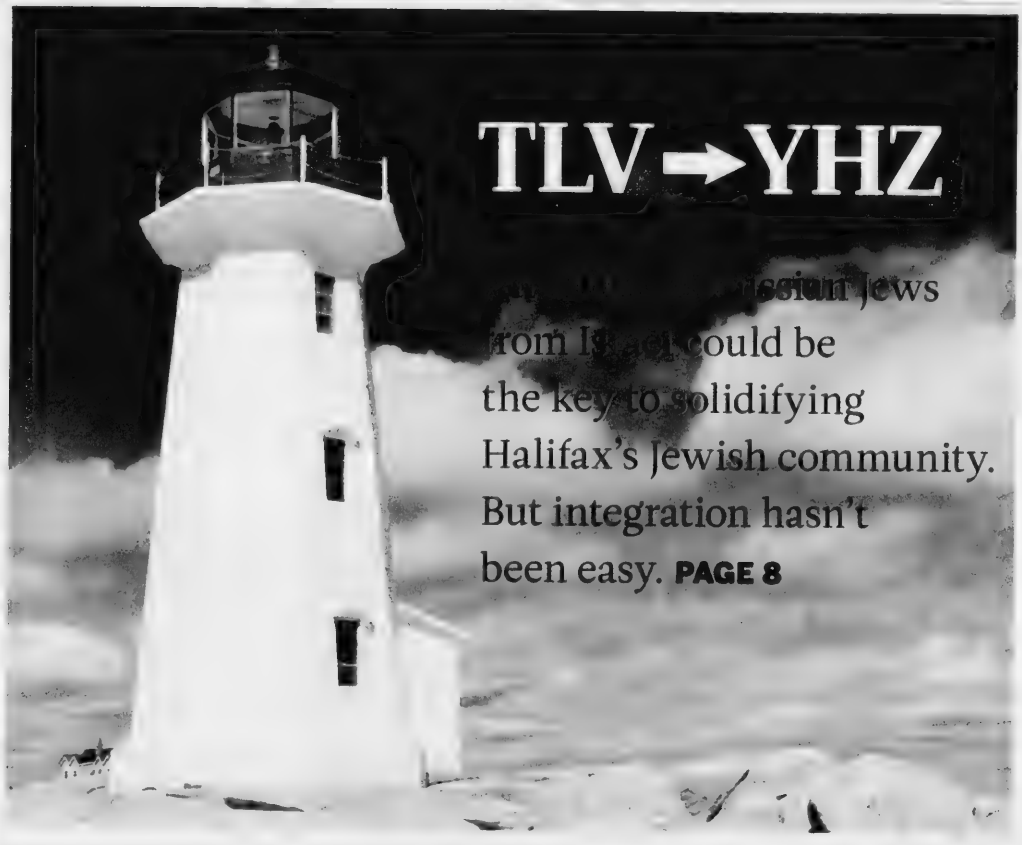

TLV→YHZ

...ssian Jews from Israel could be the key to solidifying Halifax's Jewish community. But integration hasn't been easy. **PAGE 8**

Housing costs spur Jewish poverty

People are homeless because waiting lists for affordable places to live are full.

PAGE 21

Shul merger talks heat up

Are Winnipeg's two largest Conservative synagogues ready to hook up? **PAGE 26**

Bee Gees inspired local singer

Peter Foldy befriended disco-era trio growing up in Australia.

PAGE 43

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Tel Aviv bar and trendy hood score high, and a dubious honour

Britain's 'Oskar Schindler' honoured

Sir Nicholas Winton, known as Britain's Oskar Schindler, will receive the Czech Republic's highest civilian honour. Winton, 105, is to receive the Order of the White Lion from Czech President Milos Zeman on Oct. 28 in Prague. In a mission known as the Czech Kindertransport, Winton saved 669 Czechoslovak children from the Nazis while serving as a British diplomat. The saved children have more than 5,000 descendants.

Tel Aviv bar, district top lists

Tel Aviv's Gan Hahashmal scored second place on Thrillist's "Top 10 sexiest neighbourhoods on Earth," losing out to Rio De Janiero's Ipanema district. "Israel's renowned for its gorgeous citizenry," according to the website Thrillist. "Add in the fact that the city's population is overwhelmingly single, and you'll start to see how a hip neighbourhood like Gan Hahashmal – with its public garden, late-Ottoman-era houses, and cutting-edge boutiques – can be a hotbed of sexy people doing sexy things." And not only is the White City among the world's sexiest, it's also home to one of the planet's best bars, with Imperial Craft Cocktail Bar being voted the "Best Bar in the Middle East and Africa" in a recent survey of industry experts conducted by *Drinks International* magazine.

Tel Aviv's Gan Hahashmal is hot.
FLASH90 PHOTO

Terrorist recognized in France

A watchdog on anti-Semitism vowed legal action after a French town named a street after Marwan Barghouti, a Palestinian who was convicted of murdering Israelis. "This celebration of a murderer is unacceptable," Sammy Ghozlan, founder of the National Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism said. During the Sept. 15 inauguration of Marwan Barghouti Alley, Valenton Mayor Françoise Baud called Barghouti "the face of the unwavering resistance of the Palestinian people against the occupation, the crimes, the destruction, the apartheid and the colonization perpetrated by the Israeli government." ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

$25 million

The amount Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, have pledged to donate to the Centers for Disease Control Foundation to help fight the Ebola virus.

274-12

The vote by the British House of Commons on a non-binding motion to recognize the state of Palestine. Prime Minister David Cameron and much of his Conservative Party abstained from voting on the motion, which was sponsored by opposition Labour MP Grahame Morris.

Quotable

The idea that Israel would be blamed for the deaths of Hamas human shields is both illogical and immoral. It also violates all principles of law

— Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz.
See full interview on page 12.

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Letters to the Editor

Flying El Al

The editorial ("A solution to flying the not-so-friendly skies," Oct. 8) suggests that a separate men-only section would be an answer to the problem of haredi men not wanting to sit beside women. This is simply accommodating the haredi religious prejudice against women.

It encourages the continuation of prejudice. It does not make the Jewish religion better. It is not providing a light unto the nations. Would the editor also accommodate a Muslim who, on his understanding of the Qur'an, did not want to sit beside a Jew?

Jonathan Usher
Toronto

Abbas' true message

In "Abbas is winning abroad but losing at home" (Oct. 2), Abdullah H. Erakat reports that in Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' speech to the UN Security Council, he described Israel as "genocidal" and a "racist occupying power." Palestinian analysts said Abbas was aiming at his home audience, where he was "seen as not being tough enough."

This leaves any sensible person to ask: if that's indeed what excites the Palestinian home audience, how is Israel ever going to have a peaceful coexistence with them and how would any two-state solution be anything more than the creation of a much bigger Gaza in Judea and Samaria?

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Anti-Semitism and activism

Paul Estrin, I read your Green party blog and I am sorry all this happened to you ("Fighting anti-Semitism in the activist community," Oct. 8).

Anti-Semitism is a virus that just keeps on splitting and spreading. I want to tell you that I advocate for human rights for all and that includes Palestinians, and as I am around people from many places, I hear terrible things said about the Jewish People and Israeli Jews. I counsel people to understand that if they are demanding justice for their people, they can't deny justice for another people.

I am not Jewish, but I have received accusations from both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict because I am critical of both sides. I condemned the Hamas executions as I was advocating for due process, not executions in the street. I used strong language calling Hamas barbaric for this action.

People attacked me, which is fine. Their point of view is always valid if it is not racist or making statements that are not true.

I have also been accused of racism because I criticized Israel's policies. This is not racism. I criticize American, Canadian and Palestinian policies, also in public. It is my point of view and I don't generalize. I call for the demilitarization of youth. This is not racism. And I listen to people who oppose me, because nothing is cut and dry.

The Internet is a powerful medium that can do such good but there are also people who take things too far and get away with abuse.

Shawn Robinson
Ottawa

Toronto's would-be mayors

I am more than disgusted by the ungracious and malicious attack by Toronto long-shot mayoral candidate Ari Goldkind on Rob and Doug Ford ("Fringe candidate slams Ford at UJA-CIJA mayoral debate," Oct. 8). Goldkind chose to malign the Fords instead of focusing on Olivia Chow, who supports the use of taxpayer funds for the Pride parade that warmly hosts a true anti-Semitic hate group, Queers Against Israeli Apartheid.

A couple of years before Rob Ford was elected mayor, when he was an Etobicoke councillor, my wife and I spotted him at a sparsely attended Israel Day celebration in North York. Not even the local councillor or the MPP could be bothered to attend. When we asked Ford what he was doing there, he replied, "Because supporting Israel is the right thing to do."

In spite of the media's rabid attention on his personal foibles, he did not and does not support those who would do the Jewish People harm. If he had his way, Pride would have to forego our taxpayer funds while it welcomes a pro-terrorist hate group.

Readers may chose to vote for Doug Ford or not, but it should not be on the basis on an unworthy assault while ignoring a candidate who embraces those who encourage anti-Semitism.

Michael Baigel
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: It has been my practice in the weeks before Rosh Hashanah to respond to many requests for my time and input with the response: "Be in touch with me after the holidays."

Now that "after the holidays" has arrived, I can attest to the weakness of this approach. These post-High Holiday and Yom Tov days end up being my busiest time of the year. Programs and classes begin, and all of the postponed meetings and commitments can no longer be delayed.

Yet dealing with "after the holidays" is not solely a rabbi's dilemma. All of us have to face the "return to earth" that follows a month of hugely significant holy days. My sense is that the month of Cheshvan presents a greater test to Jews than Tishrei. How we live out the ordinary, unexciting days of our lives represents the greatest test of our Jewish mettle.

Rabbi Finegold: Your dilemma reminds me of a T-shirt I once saw that said "Rabbis Heart Cheshvan." One day I want to print up a response: "Tishrei = Rabbinic Tax Season."

There will always be busy times and non-busy times, and we need to temper the moments of awe with moments of the mundane. Have you thought of using all the backlog of meetings to address that very issue?

Imagine if you began every meeting during Cheshvan by asking your congregants how they plan to bring some of the heightened feelings of Yom Kippur or Sukkot into their everyday lives.

As a non-pulpit rabbi, I have always appreciated when a rabbi serves not only as a teacher, but as a moral compass, asking me pointedly where I might be able to better myself. Granted, I am blessed to have one of the clergy members of my congregation at my dinner table every night, and she excels at pushing me gently but firmly to be a better person. But as rabbis, we should feel comfortable doing so with all of our congregants.

Rabbi Scheim: In the *Modim* prayer of the *Amidah*, we reference the "miracles that are with us every day." Thus, we are reminded that moments of holiness are not limited to times and places designated as holy, but are present in the normal avenues of life as well.

As a newly minted rabbi, I was inclined to think that I would be entering a congregation as the Judaic authority in a community of people lacking many of the fundamentals of Jewish learning. Rabbi William Horn, with whom I interned before ordination, dispelled me of that youthful arrogance.

He noted that, yes, he likely knew more about Jewish law, practice, history and theology than the vast majority of his congregants. But, they were far superior to him in other fields of knowledge. They would learn from him, just as he would learn from them.

Holiness is not limited to the holy days of our calendar, and holiness is not confined to the synagogue or to the rabbi's study. There are magnificent sparks of the divine present in the multitude of honourable deeds that members of our congregations and communities perform on a daily basis. They learn from us (hopefully) and we (certainly) learn from them.

Rabbi Finegold: The Talmud reminds us that we learn more from our colleagues and students than our teachers, but inherent in that dictum is the imperative to be a teacher nonetheless. The challenge of the modern rabbi is to recognize, as you point out, that the members of our communities are quite knowledgeable and observant, while also cognizant of the choice that these people have made in selecting a specific spiritual guide.

The beauty of Cheshvan is that we can take a step back from the heavy sermonizing of Tishrei while still finding the space to activate different parts of our leadership. Could you imagine if as rabbis we treated Cheshvan differently, not as the comedown from the high holidays, but as the beginning of our thinking for the next 12 months?

Maybe we can see Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan as Rosh Hashanah L'rabbanim – New Year's for rabbis – where we take a deep breath, think about how we want to lead the following Rosh Hashanah and spend the next 11 months building toward it. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Reaping the harvest

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

A group of boys harvest hay in the fields of the Canadian Jewish Farm School in Georgetown, Ont. The school was established in 1927 by Morris Saxe, president of the Federated Jewish Farmers of Ontario as a training school for Polish war orphans brought to Canada after World War I.

SeeJN | Canadians in Jerusalem

HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90

Thousands of Christian evangelists, including these Canadians, wave their national flag alongside the Israeli one as they march in a parade in the centre of Jerusalem, marking the Jewish holiday of Sukkot on Oct. 14.

From Yoni's Desk

It must not happen again

The Jewish world was rocked last week by the arrest of Rabbi Barry Freundel. The now-suspended rabbi of Washington, D.C.'s Kesher Israel Congregation is alleged to have planted a video recording device in the showering area of his shul's mikvah (for more on this story, see page 41). In the weeks to come, this ugly incident is sure to spark serious and important debate. Indeed, since a significant number of Jewish journalists, media outlets and bloggers closed shop for Sukkot a day after the charges were laid, we are still in the earliest stages of this story, even though Rabbi Freundel's arrest is now more than a week old.

There is every reason to believe this was an isolated case – not the first time a rabbi has acted criminally or inappropriately to be sure, but still an uncommon occurrence. And yet, many rabbis in the United States, Canada and beyond will be forced to deal with the fallout. People will try to paint Rabbi Freundel, who has pleaded not guilty to voyeurism charges, as some kind of symbol of a backward and abusive Orthodox Judaism. That is patently unfair.

A number of questions arise from this sordid episode, first and foremost about the role women should play in Orthodox Judaism. It's difficult not to wonder whether Rabbi Freundel would have been in a position to allegedly plant his recording device if more women were empowered with rabbinic – or rabbi-like – authority in the Orthodox community. Video recordings of the showers at Kesher Israel's mikvah may date back as far as 2012. Perhaps if there were more women in positions of influence, Rabbi Freundel might have been caught sooner. At the very least, establishing female authority over women's mikvahs seems to be a no-brainer.

This incident may have also indirectly exposed flaws in the conversion system in America. A day after the arrest, reports emerged that Rabbi Freundel had only recently been investigated by the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) regarding separate allegations of unethical behaviour. Earlier this year, the RCA received a tip that Rabbi Freundel had allegedly booked a hotel room with a woman who was in the process of converting to Judaism. Rabbi Freundel, who is married, denied the claims, and the investigation was halted when the individual who brought the matter forward would not present further information, citing legal reasons.

But this second set of allegations is especially troubling, since Rabbi Freundel previously chaired an RCA committee that drafted new protocols for conversions. For years, there have been calls for more transparency in the conversion process amid stories of rabbis imposing draconian, even abusive, edicts upon potential converts. Abuse of power – in the synagogue as well as in other Jewish institutions – is a serious concern. Its victims deserve support.

In the aftermath of this scandal, there is much to investigate – and not only in the Orthodox community. Rabbis hold a sacred space in Judaism, even at a time when their position is being eroded. If convicted, Rabbi Freundel will evict himself from that group. His former colleagues – and all of us, really – are tasked with doing the utmost to make sure something like this doesn't happen again. ■ — YONI

Essay

Jewish renewal in Israel has four main challenges

Rabbi Ariel Picard

The phenomenon of Jewish renewal in Israel is not just a passing phase. It has been developing and growing from strength to strength for two decades now, and its presence is felt ever more strongly in the public arena, in the cultural realm, and in Israel's different educational streams. With the start of the new academic year, and after a very difficult summer, pluralistic Jewish education in Israel stands at the threshold of four main challenges.

Discovering Judaism's spiritual treasures can be likened to entering a sea of boundless waters. The novice learner is exposed to varied, plentiful sources that require knowledge and mastery. Bewildered learners often face Orthodox teachers who demonstrate knowledge and self-assurance on Jewish religious issues. They project authority and are categorical about the boundaries of possible interpretation, which is liable to confuse new learners who lack confidence and authority on such matters.

Indeed, teachers of Jewish studies in Israel's state education system must turn themselves into scholars and inculcate curiosity and diligence in their students. But that is not enough. Pluralistic learners often are bewildered not because of a lack of knowledge, but rather because they come with a different approach. The traditional learner views traditional interpretation as exclusive and unequivocal, and therefore has looked upon pluralistic learners, who often seek to encourage debate and innovation, as being ignorant and mistaken. State schools seeking to encourage Jewish studies must be careful in their selection of teachers for these subjects. Jewish pluralism must be a prerequisite for Jewish instruction in the school. It is not the personal identity of the teacher that should be the deciding factor; the teacher may be religious, Orthodox, secular, or traditional. The question is, to what extent will the teacher respect a range of ideas? To what extent will the teacher expose students to a diversity of opinions instead of only to his or her personal opinion?

Nationalism and racism

This past summer, we saw how racism and xenophobia can surge in times of conflict and war. Preoccupation with a Jewish identity fuels a positive sense of belonging, but may also engender hate and fear. It must be acknowledged that there are opinions in Jewish tradition that take a negative approach to non-Jews, and yet there are also many sources that promote tolerance and pluralism among all human beings.

It must be the task of the educator to present these various opinions and to discuss them in class, but at the same time to defend a single philosophical approach and explain it to the students. We educate in the framework of a philosophy that sees the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. As such, we must discuss and emphasize those sources and streams of thought in the Jewish tradition that support a democratic approach, which promote human equality and equal rights regardless of religion, race, or gender. We must choose those sources in our multifaceted heritage that are aligned with our moral values and worldview, just as others with different opinions find in Judaism a source of inspiration for their own worldviews.

> *Study is greater, for it leads to action*

Learning as the basis for action

"Study is greater, for it leads to action." This proverb from the ancient rabbis characterizes a Judaism in which the practical and existential focus on maintaining a Jewish way of life is central to the Jewish identity. The Israeli movement to renew Jewish thought and learning started out by concentrating on studying and opening the Jewish bookshelf to reinterpretation. Such learning is designed to inspire and to provide a platform for moral discussion, as well as to address the eternal questions of the human condition, but it generally lacks a focus on their effective application in practice.

In his classic article, "Halachah and Aggadah" ("Law and Legend"), the great Israeli poet Chaim Nachman Bialik contended that the conceptual world, learning, and philosophy are not enough to create a culture. Laws are required, as well as deeds and actions. Educators face this challenge as well. Thus, for instance, studying questions of social justice must lead to social action, and addressing the relationship between human beings and nature must shape hands-on environmental activity in the real world. The annual cycle and the Jewish festivals and holidays taught in the education system must be expressed in the form of a regular and binding custom in the school, and in the realm of the family and the community alike.

Prayer and the search for a spiritual experience

The Israeli movement for Jewish renewal began to engage in prayer after realizing that people and communities need spirituality, they need to elevate themselves, and they need sanctity. In this area, too, we find creativity and innovation merging with significant segments of tradition that have not lost their vitality or their potency. This is an important realization, facilitating the transition to the next stages of Jewish renewal in Israel. Many still see prayer as a phenomenon that belongs to the traditional religious world, but presumably, just as the barrier to studying Torah has been overcome, so too will the barrier in the spiritual sphere be overcome.

Just as liturgy was composed and new prayers added in every generation and in every community and congregation, our generation too bears responsibility for shaping its own prayers. The language of modern Hebrew poetry can contribute greatly to heightening the emotional depth of prayer and transforming it into a shared experience for the community as a whole.

This requires more work in the school and in the community. ■

Rabbi Ariel Picard is a research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and the educational director of the Shalom Hartman Institute's Be'eri program. Translated from Hebrew by Katy Lavrovski.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 23, 2014

Newcomers give Halifax a shot in the arm

LEAH COLLINS LIPSETT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

More than 100 families of Israeli-Russian Jews have migrated from Israel to Halifax over the past six years, and just in time. The newcomers might be just what Halifax's small, aging Jewish community needs to survive.

For years, the number of Jewish seniors in Halifax had been increasing dramatically, while young Jews moved away in droves to larger population centres such as Toronto or Montreal. In 2009, Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA's demographic task force predicted that Jewish seniors in Halifax would increase from about 7 per cent of the community in 2001 to 20.5 per cent in 2021.

"There were two generations that were completely missing from this congregation," says Rabbi Amram Maccabi of Halifax's only Orthodox synagogue, Beth Israel.

In 2007, the Atlantic Jewish Council (AJC) decided to try using immigration to revitalize the population. It tapped a provincial government initiative that allows community organizations to find particular groups of immigrants, and through the program, it identified Israeli-Russian Jews as a good match.

After the massive post-Soviet aliyah in the 1990s, Rabbi Maccabi says, some olim "fell between the cracks." It was those people – Russian-born Jews who had migrated to Israel as children and now had children of their own – who were interested in coming to Canada.

But even with the help of the provincial immigration program, their settlement in Halifax, which has about 1,900 Jews, wasn't easy.

The AJC's effort started out with the support of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, but after JIAS was reorganized in 2013, the AJC was on its own, says executive director Jon Goldberg.

"There was little money and little help. Most of the people in Toronto…didn't think it would work," he says. "None of us had ever done this before."

"I'm in the Jew business, not the immigration business," Goldberg likes to say. And from Goldberg's perspective, the newcomers' integration went slower than he'd hoped it would.

"All our families are seniors. How many [of them] are going to end up palling around with a young couple with two little kids?" Goldberg says. "They're grandparents already."

Rabbi Amram Maccabi's shul has embraced the Israeli-Russians. LEAH COLLINS LIPSETT PHOTO

It seemed like a Catch-22. The main problem with integration was exactly the reason the newcomers were so dearly needed: those two missing generations.

Rabbi Maccabi thinks he's found the answer to that problem.

Himself an immigrant from Israel, Rabbi Maccabi moved to Halifax three years ago at the urging of his own rabbi. His teacher encouraged Rabbi Maccabi to go beyond his comfort zone and "spread your faith like a lighthouse," and he had also known another rabbi who had served in Halifax some years before, and he thought his protegé would like it.

Today, more than one-fifth of the newcomer families have applied to become paying members of Beth Israel.

Why have they been attracted to his shul? "You need to want them… and we want them very much."

He and his wife, Avia, showed how much he wanted them by inviting both Israeli-Russian families and local Halifax Jews into their home every Shabbat.

But Rabbi Maccabi had more in mind than being friendly. He was also secretly playing matchmaker.

"Many times we invited two families that we thought were a match," he says with a grin.

Sure enough, "They found friendship in each other." Now, he says, they invite each other to community events and to each other's homes on their own.

But Rabbi Maccabi doesn't take credit for what he feels has been the tremendously successful integration of the newcomers. He thinks there's been matchmaking by a greater force at work.

"This group of people… it's like a present from God, given to this place, to save it," he says.

"Literally, I think it is. It's exactly the ages, exactly what they need. It's the perfect people to come here."

There are other reasons it's a good match, Rabbi Maccabi says. For instance, he notes that his congregation's liturgy is Orthodox, but not all of its members are fully observant at home. Similarly, he says, the newcomers' "Jewish identity is strong. They're very much aware of it, but it's not the centre of their lives."

This is partly because when they were growing up in the Soviet Union, practising their faith was largely forbidden.

Neli Shpoker, one of the new arrivals, says that's what made her family make aliyah when she was eight.

Like many of the Israeli-Russian newcomers, her own reasons for leaving the Jewish state more than 20 years later were mixed. The political situation played a role, she says, but the biggest factor was the increased opportunities for her children, who were one and five at the time.

Shpoker and her family have been living in Halifax for three years now. She works at the AJC and is a paralegal student.

Despite the difficulties of settling in Nova Scotia's capital, when asked how she likes Halifax, Shpoker smiles. "I like it," she says, then corrects herself: "I love it."

She adds: "The people are different. The approach is different. But I love it."

On the day she spoke to *The CJN*, Shpoker was particularly happy because her membership had just been approved at Beth Israel.

"I'm starting to be involved" in the shul and in the wider community, she says.

This involvement seems to be a good sign. But Goldberg is holding off on making a final judgment.

"We're fortunate to have them here. I think time will tell, as a Jewish community, how we benefit and grow from the influx," he says.

"If we can come up with the resources and the patience to deal with the problems that are present and foreseeable, I think 10 or 15 years from now, we will be lucky."

Rabbi Maccabi has no such hesitation.

"They are the natural continuation of this place… they can revive it," he says. "I don't see any other option for this place without them." ■

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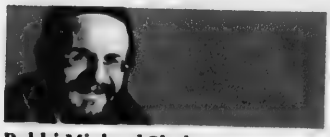
An ironic development in the battle for Jewish souls



Rabbi Michael Skobac

It's that time of the year again, and Jews for Judaism has received dozens of phone calls and emails to let us know. Hundreds of Jewish homes in Toronto from Thornhill down to the Bathurst and Lawrence area have received a slick package from the City of David missionary group over the past weeks. Many are understandably upset by this intrusion, but few realize it's a small part of an enormous effort by evangelical Christians to sway us to their faith.

The oldest such project is the Toronto Jewish Mission, which began proselytizing immigrants in downtown Toronto in 1894. It recently evolved into an organization that almost exclusively uses online virtual outreach. The notorious Jews for Jesus missionary group has been aggressively targeting Jews in Toronto for decades.

Chosen People Ministries has been active in Toronto since the 1980s and recently established a messianic centre near the Yorkdale mall. One of their most brazen tactics has been to train Filipino Christians employed as home health care workers to share the gospel with their sick and elderly Jewish clients.

Dozens of other missionary projects operate in Toronto whose specific focus is reaching Jewish people. They disseminate literature, hold concerts and holiday programs, and increasingly use the Internet in their quest for Jewish souls. Many seek to mobilize Christian lay people to share their faith with Jewish friends, neighbours and business associates.

Throughout Canada and across the world, the centrepiece of missionary programs to reach Jewish people has become the messianic synagogue movement. Designed to overcome the guilt and discomfort Jewish people have with attending traditional churches and feeling like they've abandoned their Judaism, these "synagogues" strive to create a Jewish feel to the Christian experience. Absent are crosses and other visible Christian symbols, replaced with menorahs, Israeli flags and a Holy Ark with Torah scrolls. Christmas and Easter are eschewed for Shabbat and Jewish holiday celebrations. Services are led by a "messianic rabbi" with many men in attendance wearing kippot and prayer shawls.

The growth of this movement has been phenomenal. In the early 1970s, there were a handful of such congregations in North America. That has now mushroomed to more than 500. Some have their own day schools for their children, and there are now about a dozen "rabbinical programs" training congregational rabbis and teachers for their schools. The movement's success in North America is being replicated worldwide, and there are currently some 140 messianic congregations in Israel.

For the past 25 years, Jews for Judaism has been working tirelessly to counter this dangerous challenge to Jewish continuity in Toronto and across Canada. Our focus has been to inoculate vulnerable Jews against this threat by raising awareness about its deceptive tactics, providing substantive Jewish responses to missionary claims and inspiring Jews with the profound spiritual depth, wisdom and beauty of Judaism. Our free educational programs and counselling services have reached thousands of Jews.

Ironically, the threats that compelled us to articulate why Judaism rejects missionary claims is now having a growing impact on Christians worldwide. Jews for Judaism videos on YouTube and KosherTube have been viewed more than 1 million times. Thousands read the material on jewsforjudaism.ca and access our Facebook page and Twitter feed. Many of these people are evangelical Christians who for the first time are hearing a Jewish perspective on topics such as the Messiah and how we atone for our transgressions.

Jews for Judaism is being contacted daily by deeply religious Christians confessing their discovery that their core beliefs aren't consistent with the Jewish Bible. They're finding the Jewish understanding of scripture much more compelling than what they'd been taught. Many are now even considering conversion to Judaism and are actively sharing their journeys online. Powerful testimony that's helping Jews for Judaism keep Jews Jewish! ■

Rabbi Michael Skobac is director of education with Jews for Judaism.

Why are Jewish camps growing?

Daniel Held

Enrolment of Toronto youth in Jewish overnight camp grew by 14 per cent in the summer of 2014, topping 2,550 campers. This year's expansion builds on last year's eight per cent growth. Camp is now the fastest growing setting of Jewish education in Toronto.

It's no surprise that summer camps are growing. All of us who spent summers at camp remember the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of camp. We remember the nervousness of the first day, wondering who would be in our cabins and what our counsellors would be like; juxtaposed to the tears on the last day lamenting that we would no longer wake up next to our best friends. We remember swimming in the frigid lake and warming up by a camp fire. We remember the ruckus singing in the *chadar* on Shabbat and the swaying in circles at *Havdalah*.

But the growth in Jewish camping is more than just the result of fond memories.

The field of Jewish camping is maturing. The Foundation for Jewish Camp, a New York-based agency that builds the capacity of Jewish camps, is a catalyst to the professionalization of the field. Through fellowships for directors, programmers and senior counsellors, FJC has built the human capital, and through parent surveys, FJC has held a mirror up to camps showing them places to hone their practice and facilities.

FJC also spearheaded the One Happy Camper initiative, which offers a $1,000 incentive grant to first-time campers. Facilitated and funded by UJA Federation's Silber Family Centre for Jewish Camping, over 2,000 Toronto youth have taken advantage of the grant and attended camp for the first time.

FJC and other proponents of Jewish summer camp have also fought hard to demonstrate the educational value of camping. Research demonstrates that participants in Jewish overnight camps are more likely to donate to Jewish causes, light Shabbat candles, attend synagogue, and be proud of their Jewish identity. These are important factors that support Jewish identity formation and buttress the value of Jewish camp.

Unfortunately, with the growth of camp, I have increasingly heard families articulate a choice between camp and school. For some enrolled in day school the refrain is "they do Jewish all year, why should they go to a Jewish camp." For others, it's a matter of budgeting and considering where you can get greater Jewish bang for the buck.

Jewish education cannot be a zero sum game. As powerful as the research demonstrating the impact of camp, school, or Israel experiences on a child's Jewish identity may be, the greatest predictor of a strong Jewish identity is having multiple touch points to Jewish living and learning. Children who have their Jewish identity reinforced at school, at home, in the synagogue, at camp and elsewhere are more likely to lead meaningful and engaged Jewish lives than those with only one point of connection.

It is incumbent on us as parents and us as a community to consider education holistically – to think about the ways in which one experience can complement and lead to another, and another, and another. As parents, we have to actively cultivate a Jewish life with multiple touchpoints for our children, eschewing the idea that limited deep experiences will suffice. As a community, we have to work towards ensuring that finances are not a barrier to engaging in multiple Jewish experiences while developing programs and professionals that naturally feed one into the other.

I don't want to bury the headline. Camp enrolment amongst Toronto Jewish youth is up 14 per cent from last year. This staggering growth can only serve to strengthen our community today and into the future. Enrolment for summer 2015 has started and bunks are filling up faster than ever before. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

A new synagogue rises in Vancouver

Jean M. Gerber

Upon completing the Temple, King Solomon asked in his prayer, "But will God really dwell on earth? Even the heavens to their uttermost regions cannot contain You, how much less this house that I have built!" (JPS translation)

Indeed, we can still ask today, what kind of physical space can contain a Mystery?

Two thousand years after the Temple fell, we still feel the need to create spaces in which we celebrate and pray. Like the rest of humanity, we continue to dedicate space that we can call "sacred." Although some, like Abraham Joshua Heschel, would argue that Judaism is a religion of time, others, revering a particular place, see it as a religion of space – hence the intense wars over control of the Kotel, the Western Wall, for example. Still other scholars would make Judaism a religion of action: what we do sanctifies a place, not what we build.

This year in Vancouver, Congregation Beth Israel celebrated Rosh Hashanah in a new sanctuary. In this age of agonizing over the future of Conservative Judaism, I can tell you that, in Vancouver, it is alive and flourishing.

Beth Israel was founded in 1932 as a Conservative congregation, the first in Vancouver (several Orthodox congregations already existed). It held services in the old Jewish community centre until after World War II, when donors raised funds and purchased the site on Oak Street, the "Jewish" street where many institutions stand. In 1948, a finished building was dedicated in memory of those synagogues destroyed by the Nazis.

That original synagogue began to show its years, and now a new building houses our sanctuary, school and offices. The old building has been repurposed into a lovely and spacious social hall.

Over the new doors is our original synagogue motto: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." On Rosh Hashanah, those doors opened for the first service.

When we entered our sanctuary on the first day, we caught our breath. Not because we were blinded by gold and silver trimming, but because we were welcomed with light and air, with burnished wood and Jerusalem stone surrounding the Ark. Gracious seating in a curved seating arrangement allows us as a congregation to feel a part of the prayer space.

The cloth covering the scrolls in the Ark depicts a landscape of hills and valleys, the sun shining on one side, the dove of peace hovering on the other. Over the Ark, the motto "*Evdo et HaShem b'simchah*" – serve the Lord with joy. That's a goal we strive to reach.

Our Torah scrolls are mantled with covers depicting each of the seven fruits of Israel and silver threads are woven in.

To the side of the main sanctuary is a "pray and play" space for families and children, where the service can be heard. Through bevels, the parents can look directly at the bimah.

The bimah itself is low and approached by both steps and a ramp, so that it is totally accessible to all.

Soon there will be two stained glass windows at the front of the building: on a blue background, created to look like flowing water, are inscribed the 10 words, the *Eser Hadibrot*, and on each are the fringes of the tallit.

These High Holidays were celebrated in a beautiful space, simple and elegant. Is that important? Vital to a sense of the holy? Couldn't we find the same awe by sitting on a mountaintop? (We have plenty to choose from out here.) Or walking the seawall? Why spend millions to build?

I can't speak for anyone else, but I personally needed to have people around, singing. There is something in our human heart that desires a community of prayer and craves a space dedicated to that community. Whether time, space or deed, the search for how to approach a Mystery continues. ■

Yom tov wrapped in a sari

Josh Scheinert

The private security guard had some questions before letting us into the building. Around him were armed police, soldiers with automatic rifles positioned behind sandbags, and an armoured Humvee. We were going to Rosh Hashanah services in Mumbai. After the 2008 terror attacks, this community takes no chances.

Inside Mumbai's sky-blue Baghdadi Knesset Eliyahoo synagogue, bright chandeliers hang from vaulted ceilings. Nathaniel, 23, has been leading services for the dwindling congregation ever since his bar mitzvah. Meanwhile, at Tiferet Yisroel synagogue, they break for Indian chai tea between Shacharit and Musaf services. We went there on the second day of Yom Tov to hear the Bene Israel chant Hebrew prayers with an Indian twang.

The highlight of spending Rosh Hashanah in Mumbai, however, was Tashlich. In Mumbai, it's the service to attend. Every year, 300 Mumbai Jews gather on the ferry wharf. Standing at the water's edge, the community stood in quiet devotion – the women in bright and colourful saris, the men in kippot. At the service's conclusion, a young boy not much past his bar mitzvah walked up to the front, raised a long shofar and sounded its note over the water. It was a poignant and public moment that symbolized how, after centuries, the Bene Israel still proudly exist.

The story in Calcutta, where we were for Yom Kippur, is starkly different. Once home to 6,000 Iraqi Jews, today the community's three gorgeous synagogues stand empty, and the famous Nahoum's bakery is without its Jewish namesake, who died last year. We set out on Kol Nidrei night to light candles at the synagogues with three of the community's able women. But for our presence, the only proof of Calcutta's Jews would have been that small flickering flame.

But then, as we arrived at the largest synagogue, a small group of Jewish tourists appeared in search of services. We stood in the empty Beth El Synagogue and sang Kol Nidrei before an open ark with two silver-encased Torah scrolls inside. The silence of the empty building was a stark contrast to the madness of the Hindu festival Durga Puja happening just outside. There were hundreds of thousands of revellers in the streets.

The next evening, as we entered Calcutta's Magen David Synagogue, Asia's largest, for the Neilah service, a lone man in a kippah holding a worn-out prayer book sat in the corner. Mordechai Israel couldn't read Hebrew, so he was just clutching his prayer book and looking at its pages.

His face lit up when he saw us, and he rushed into stories about the community – about how the synagogue used to be packed and they had to bring in chairs from outside, about the sound of the cantor's voice (it had been 25 years since Calcutta had a cantor), and about how rich and vibrant the community used to be.

Then his face turned sombre as he admitted to us that now there was nothing. Mordechai, too, would soon be leaving. In a little more than two weeks, he was making aliyah to Israel. His heart was there, he told us. There was nothing left for him in the community anymore, just memories.

We had never met Mordechai before, but the connection was instant. The universality of our shared religion – the shared experience of the holiday – was enough to bring us together.

When the time came to say Neilah, Mordechai suggested that we recite it from the bimah, which we did. And so ended a Yom Kippur in Calcutta, in a near-empty synagogue, with two Canadians, an Israeli, and an Indian soon to be an Israeli. We concluded with *Avinu Malkeinu* and then sang "Next Year in Jerusalem." For the four of us present, that hopeful prayer took on a whole new meaning. ■

Josh Scheinert is a Toronto-based lawyer currently spending a semester in India as a visiting law professor with O.P. Jindal Global University.

News

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Alan Dershowitz: Israel judged by harsher standard

PAUL LUNGEN
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Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who spoke to UJA major donors Oct. 19 in Toronto, proudly wears the badge as "Israel's single most visible defender." He also bills himself as "the Jewish state's lead attorney in the court of public opinion." A prolific author and frequent commentator on legal and political issues, he recently released a new book designed to make Israel's case in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge. Called *Terror Tunnels: The Case for Israel's Just War Against Hamas*, the book has been released as an e-book and will be available in print soon.

In your new book, you make the case for Israel in its war against Hamas. Why is there a need to write a book now defending Israel?

When I wrote my first book for Israel [in 2003], *The Case for Israel*, I asked myself the same question. Nobody has to make the case for Sweden, France or Canada. Why should somebody have to make the case for Israel back then? Why should anybody have to make the case for Israel's just actions in Gaza now? And the reason is that Israel has been convicted of war crimes in the court of public opinion, in many European countries, on many university campuses in Canada and the United States and throughout Europe, and in the hearts and minds of many ignorant people around the world who don't understand that what Israel did in Gaza is exactly what they would do and what their country would do if they faced comparable threats.

The nation-state of the Jewish People has always been judged by a harsher standard. The best example of that is when my own president, who is a friend of mine and whom I supported, criticized Israel for "not doing the job to avoid civilian casualties" during the Gaza war, and then when our country went to war against ISIS, he rescinded his policy of avoiding air strikes unless there was near certainty of no civilian casualties.

President Barack Obama was mugged by reality when he saw that you can't fight terrorists who embed themselves among civilians, without inflicting some civilian casualties.

I wrote the book for two reasons: one, to inform open-minded people about why they should support Israel's actions in Gaza, and second, to give ammunition to pro-Israel students on campus, faculty members, ordinary citizens, so that they can win the fight for the hearts and minds of people in the court of public opinion.

During Operation Protective Edge, there were lots of stories about Hamas using human shields and placing its rockets in population centres, and Hamas rejected numerous ceasefire proposals. Yet Israel still gets criticized for those civilian casualties. You mentioned a double standard. Is anti-Semitism at play when it comes to the criticism of Israel?

The double standard grows out of the fact that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish People. If this were Sweden being attacked by Denmark, nobody would apply a double standard. It's because Israel is the nation state of the Jewish People that the double standard is applied to it.

Alan Dershowitz FILE PHOTO

And the idea that Israel would be blamed for the deaths of Hamas human shields is both illogical and immoral. It also violates all principles of law. In my book, *Terror Tunnels*, I give the obvious example of a bank robber who robs a bank and then takes a child as a hostage and holds the child in front of him and begins to fire at the customers, hitting some, missing others. A policeman comes in and in an effort to stop the shooter, he takes careful aim at the shooter's head hoping to avoid hitting the child, but at the last minute, the shooter raises the child and the bullet hits the child and kills him. Who's responsible, legally, morally and in every other way? Of course, the bank robber who took the hostage is responsible, not the policeman who took all precautions to avoid killing the hostage.

The same thing is true in Gaza. Every single death of a human shield, every single death of every Palestinian who was in the area where Hamas was either building tunnels or firing rockets, every single one of those deaths is attributable legally and morally to Hamas.

This fits in to what I call in my book Hamas' dead baby strategy. It's a cruel term, but it's absolutely accurate.

How can Hamas get away with it within their own population base? Do they feel that's the proper way to attack Israel?

There are clearly some Palestinian mothers who love their children as much as Israeli mothers love their children, and they are not happy to see their children die, although they, too, blame it on Israel.

But there are some who are prepared to martyr their children. I've quoted them in material I've written. Mothers who say I have nine children and I want them each to be martyred. Mothers who say to suicide bombers, "Don't come back to me alive. You'll be disgrace to the family. I want you to die." There is a culture of death among some Islamic extremists, and some do live within Gaza.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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The municipal election and the Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Doug Ford campaigns at Sheppard Plaza on Sunday. DANIEL WOLGELERENTER PHOTO

Of the main issues in the upcoming municipal election, few can be deemed explicitly "Jewish" – that is, of relevance solely to the city's Jewish community.

Like most constituents, Toronto Jews seem predominantly concerned with transit, gridlock, housing and taxes.

Israel – a political wedge issue for many Canadian Jews – rarely enters the conversation.

And yet, on several occasions in the lively lead-up to voting day on Oct. 27, matters pertaining to the Jewish community have been come to the fore, if only fleetingly.

Here, then, is a roundup of some of the "Jewish" municipal election issues that have arisen – both those that have occupied headlines and those less conspicuous.

Queers Against Israeli Apartheid

At a Sept. 19 mayoral debate between two of the race's leading candidates, John Tory and Olivia Chow, hosted by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC), an otherwise civil conversation turned less decorous when the question of whether the city should make funding Pride contingent on the participation of the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) in the festival's flagship parade.

Tory, the darling of the crowd, who were mostly senior FSWC members or top donors, reiterated a long-held position that he would vote to withdraw Pride funding if QuAIA is allowed to march, while Chow, though she said she doesn't agree with the group's message, said QuAIA's presence shouldn't warrant de-funding the event.

While Tory's statement made a brief media splash, particularly since in 2011, the city manager deemed QuAIA's message not to be in violation of Toronto's anti-discrimination policy, the issue seemed to be more of a red herring than anything else, and it wasn't brought up at a subsequent debate co-hosted by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and United Jewish Appeal (UJA).

"I don't think it's a burning issue in the [Jewish] community," CIJA's vice-president for the Toronto region, Howard English, told *The CJN*. "I'd say the vast majority of Jewish community members are upset about the presence of this group at Pride, but we should note that the QuAIA contingent at the parade was very small this year, while the [pro-Israeli] presence was very large… QuAIA is a small contingent of extremists that lack major support."

Community security

The issue of safety at Jewish community institutions, such as synagogues and day schools, has taken on increased relevance after Israel's latest war with Hamas in Gaza triggered a spike in reported anti-Semitic incidents in cities worldwide, including some in Toronto.

The issue was raised at the FSWC and CIJA/UJA debates, and both Chow and Tory stressed the need for strong, intercultural education and community co-operation with the Toronto Police Service.

At the CIJA debate, which, in addition to Chow and Tory featured fellow leading contender Doug Ford and Jewish long-shot candidate Ari Goldkind, Ford noted that the city had hired more police officers under his brother's administration and re-allocated a number of them to the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS).

Regarding community security, Goldkind, the dark horse whose catty one-liners and progressive, pro-taxation platforms have garnered attention of late, told *The CJN* in a phone interview that he believes Toronto is a very safe city.

"Could it be safer? Yes," he said. "But we live in a multicultural city with a lot of people who don't like each other. That's a reality. I'm not in favour of more armed guards or metal detectors. I think that degrades our quality of life."

Ultimately, while Jewish voters presumably want candidates to be sensitive to the community's concerns about security, the issue doesn't fall exclusively under the purview of the mayor.

"The federal government has already developed an infrastructure program that provides matching grants for institutions within vulnerable communities that want to enhance security," noted English, referring to the National Crime Prevention Centre's Security Infrastructure Program (SIP), which collaborates with communities with a demonstrated history of being targeted by hate crimes.

"Municipally, the role a mayor plays is to support the police service in moving quickly in the event of breaches of community security… the Toronto Police Service [already] does an excellent job of moving fast when an incident strikes a Jewish institution."

He added: "All the candidates have developed a warm relationship with the Jewish community… We're satisfied with the degree of understanding among all of them regarding our community's security."

The Fords and the Jews

The highest-profile, though arguably the least substantial, "Jewish" election matter was Ford's invocation at the CIJA debate of his "Jewish doctor… Jewish dentist… Jewish lawyer… Jewish accountant," and, several days later, of his maybe, possibly, Jewish wife (whose maternal grandparents were reportedly Jewish).

His bumbling on the subject, which was nearly drowned out by the audience's booing, was a reaction to Goldkind's accusation that Ford hadn't sufficiently apologized for his brother's past use of an anti-Semitic slur. Ford reiterated his disapproval of the slur and stressed his "family's utmost respect for the Jewish community."

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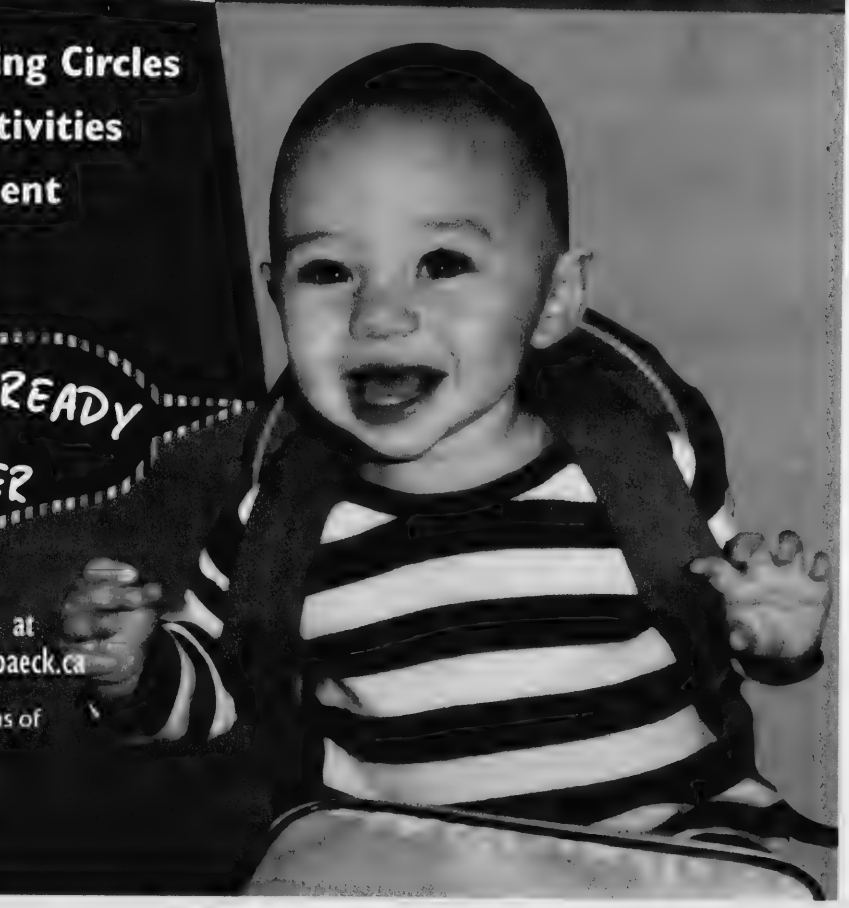

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Uganda's Abayudaya: recent additions to the Jewish family

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Unlike the Jews of Ethiopia and the Lemba of Zimbabwe, the Abayudaya are fairly recent additions to the worldwide Jewish family.

Numbering about 2,000 people scattered throughout rural communities in eastern Uganda, the Abayudaya trace their heritage back about 100 years, when ancestors of the current population adopted Judaism as their faith.

On Oct. 26, one of the community's young activists, Shoshanna Nambi, will visit Congregation Darchei Noam in Toronto as part of a month-long North American speaking tour sponsored by Kulanu, a U.S.-based organization that supports isolated and emerging Jewish communities throughout the world.

She will discuss the role of women in the Abayudaya community, present a slideshow of photographs, and sing local tunes in Luganda, the predominant language of Uganda, and in Hebrew.

In an email interview from her home in Uganda, Nambi said the Abayudaya are observant Jews. Many have been converted under Conservative rabbinic auspices.

"The Abayudaya are shomrei Shabbat and shomrei Torah," she stated.

Worshipping in six synagogues, the Abayudaya "keep and celebrate all the Jewish holidays. Right now, every home has a built sukkah with their families. We do celebrate them just like all the Jews in the world. We have composed tunes to the Hebrew songs and psalms in Luganda."

"Women in the community are still responsible for keeping the homes Jewish and kosher and preparing for the Jewish holidays," she stated. "They also have day jobs. Some of them are teachers and some run their own small businesses. Some make and sell kippot and jewelry. We also have a wonderful rabbi who encourages men to also take part and help women at home."

The community's spiritual leader, Rabbi Gershom Sizomu, received rabbinic ordination after studying at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles.

"We also have an Orthodox community and some of them have [received] an Orthodox conversion. But that is not the case with most of the Abayudaya," Nambi said.

The Abayudaya are not the only black Jews of Africa. Wikipedia reported that when Rabbi Sizomu held a conversion ceremony in 2008, the Abayudaya were joined by people from Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.

Shoshanna Nambi LORNE MALLIN PHOTO

Nambi said that the Igbo Jews of Nigeria claim [to be] part of Israel. The Lemba also claim to have been part of Israel although they are just returning to Judaism.

The Abayudaya, which translates as "People of Judah" in the Lugandan language, faced persecution in the 1970s under the regime of former strongman Idi Amin.

"During Idi Amin a lot of people converted to other faiths in fear of their lives and the number of Abayudaya decreased greatly," she said. "Idi Amin only allowed Christians and Muslims but greatly favoured the Muslims because he was a Muslim."

Today, things have changed. "It was harder to live with the Christian and Muslim neighbours but now they are accepting because we share our two Jewish communities' schools with all the Muslim and Christian children. We do work together. Right now I would say it's harder to get kosher wine and meat than [to live] with our neighbours."

Nambi said the Abayudaya are largely Zionist.

"Israel is very important to the Abayudaya community. It's part of every Jewish person's heritage and pride. We pray for its peace in our services and in our two Jewish schools the students learn about Israel and the Holocaust and the stories of Jews in Spain among others."

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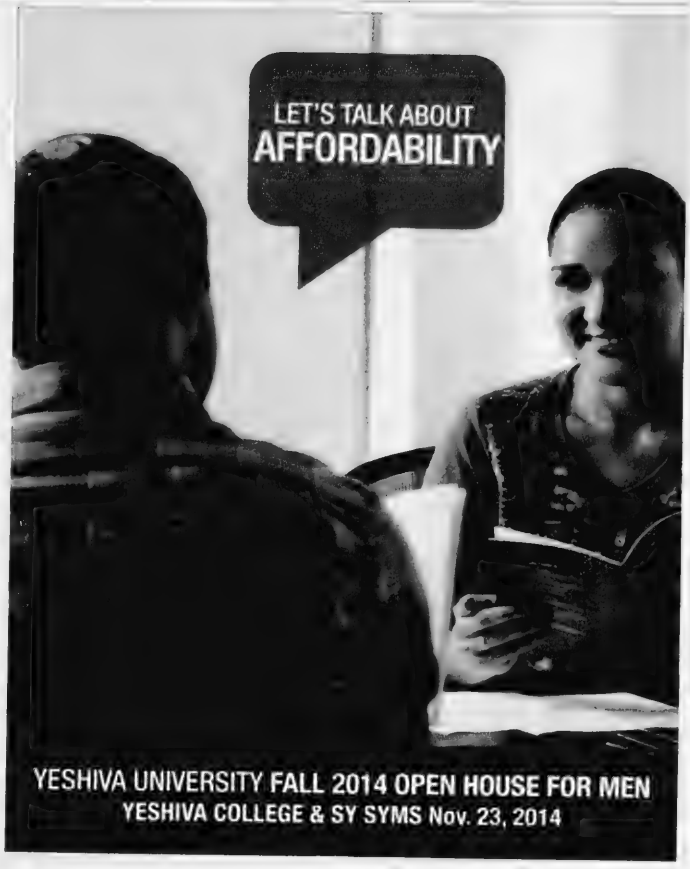

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ESSAY

Call-to-action: a builder's perspective

CARY GREEN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There is poverty in the Jewish community.

A term often used to describe many of these people is working poor – a term I dislike. They are hardworking people, earning $50,000 to $60,000 a year, trying to support a family.

They include people such as nurses, cab-drivers, supply teachers and individuals with PhDs, yet, regardless of their achievements, they still cannot afford to live in the City of Toronto.

All kinds of help is required for these people, not just bricks and sticks.

Direct rent supplements from the government are one meaningful, steady way to help. Landlords, however, must be committed to allowing tenants receiving rent supplements to live in units for at least five years, not just when there are short-term high-vacancy rates.

The real solution is to build new, affordable rental housing in Toronto to deal with current waiting lists.

Our companies, Greenwin and Verdiroc, are examples of builders that, for almost 65 years, have been developing various forms of affordable rental housing. We have done this through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), as well as through non-profits and other government programs at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

Two years ago, Verdiroc's executive director of project management, planning, and development, Hanita Braun, and I took the lead with the development bond concept.

We have recently brought this to the attention of the federal government as a new way to pay for affordable rental housing.

The idea is for the government to raise capital via the sale of development bonds. We feel investors will find this concept appealing and will respond favourably, as they did in both April and July of this year, with the sale of long-term federal bonds.

In turn, builders can use that capital interest-free, with principal payments of two per cent per year (after year 1 of occupancy) for 25 years, at which point they will be able to use the balance of principal and interest for the following 25 years. The end cost to the government would be around $75,000 per unit, rather than the $150,000 per unit that the government currently spends on affordable rental housing in Toronto. We are already actively working with the government to implement this concept.

Municipalities must also forgive development charges, waive property taxes for 25 years, and provide breaks on the cost of building permits. These incentives will motivate developers to construct new affordable rental housing.

The development bond concept was endorsed by more than 70,000 members of the Carpenters Union last year, as well as by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario and other major industry groups.

It is up to the private sector, working in conjunction with the non-profit sector, to come up with innovative solutions. We need to change the fact that there is currently no meaningful, affordable rental housing industry, or a proper mechanism for raising the capital such an industry requires.

I know we can design and build affordable rental housing for hardworking Canadians. It is also important to allocate up to 25 per cent of the units in any new affordable rental building for subsidized rents, as well as for appropriate support workers where necessary.

I believe there can be a future where Jewish tenants who qualify will have opportunities for affordable rents. Kehilla Residential Programme's rental assistance program is one initiative that makes this happen, but we need larger programs similar to this one. Private developers know how to make this work today. Enough time has been wasted with processes that are not sustainable.

Kehilla uses Sukkahville - a design competition, exhibition, and fundraiser - to provide rent assistance and raise awareness of homelessness and housing needs. I like Sukkahville – it's a great metaphor. A sukkah is a non-permanent house with intentional holes in the roof. What could possibly better represent the plight of under-housed, homeless, house poor people, on any part of that spectrum, who aren't able to afford even the most modest accommodation? The idea is to move from the sukkah into a permanent home. It's the perfect metaphor for the problem.

There are a number of excellent Jewish agencies like Kehilla and B'nai Brith, which are trying to solve the issue of poverty and affordable housing. Let us commit today to uniting and taking care of the poor and the homeless, by working with all levels of government for sustainable solutions to these growing issues. ■

Cary Green is chair of Greenwin, executive vice-president of Verdiroc Development Corporation, and a former board member of the Kehilla Residential Programme.

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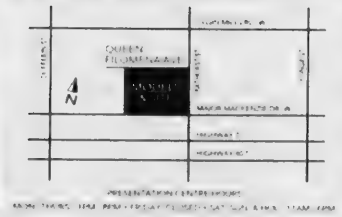

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Housing costs a key driver of poverty

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

While Jewish poverty rates in Canada's major cities vary, one thing that is consistent is the impact that the scarcity of affordable housing has on those struggling to stay above the poverty line.

In Toronto, where more than 24,000 Jews are considered poor, there may be 10,000 people on a 10-year waiting list to access affordable housing offered by the Kehilla Residential Programme, said Nancy Singer, Kehilla's executive director.

Kehilla, established in 1982 in affiliation with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, has 338 units in three buildings along the heavily Jewish Bathurst Street corridor, 228 of which are subsidized.

"The problem is that there are priorities given to homelessness and victims of abuse, so those are the people who are getting the units, so we may not even be getting to the chronological list," Singer said.

"That is what is frightening and those are the scary statistics that we hear all the time – how we're not making a dent, how we're not moving forward and people who need housing are not getting affordable housing."

Singer said the buildings that house the subsidized units were built when there was a provincial social housing program, "which was buried in 1995 by the [Mike] Harris government, never to be resurrected.

"There have been different, smaller programs... but nothing to the magnitude and the scale of funding that was available in those years," she said, adding that in the 14 years that she has been at the helm for Kehilla, the agency has had to be creative about solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

For example, the Jewish Community Affordable Rental Program (JCARP) was launched in 2004, funded by UJA Federation and administered by Kehilla. The program is meant to identify and place clients of Jewish community agencies, including Jewish Immigrant Aid Service (JIAS) and Jewish Family and Child Service (JF&CS), in affordable units situated on or near the Bathurst Street corridor, where many poor Jewish families are paying between 50 and 70 per cent of their income on rent.

Kehilla also assists about 20 families with rent subsidies – up to $300 a month – to bridge the gap between market rental rates and what Jewish families can afford.

Leah Berger

Leah Berger, senior planning associate for Federations CJA in Montreal and the co-ordinator of its social advocacy committee, said that in her city, where the Jewish poverty rate is the highest in the country at 20 per cent, "there has been an increasing recognition for the need of a community response to the pressing housing needs of the Jewish community.

"There is a scarcity of low-cost, safe and well-maintained housing options, which compounds the challenges faced by individuals and families living in poverty who often spend a disproportionate amount of their monthly income on rent, frequently on sub-standard housing," Berger said.

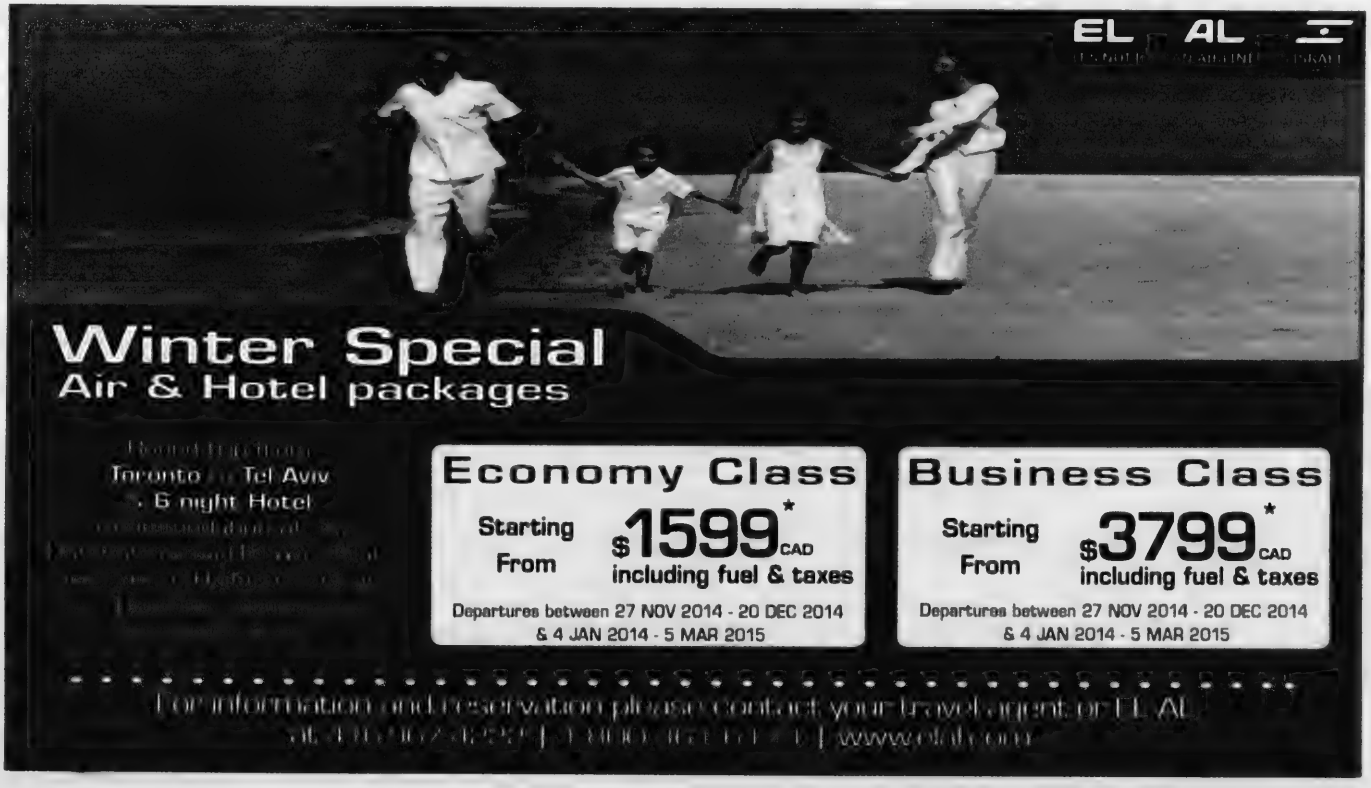
She added that the current wait time for affordable housing can be up to 10 years, and there are very few options in the areas of Montreal that are heavily populated by Jews.

While low-cost housing for Jews is available at B'nai Brith House and the Caldwell Residences, they are for seniors and the units are studio or one-bedroom apartments that can't accommodate families.

"What we are looking to do is provide low-cost quality housing in areas of Montreal that would be desirable for members of the Jewish community, such as Cote Saint-Luc," Berger said.

"We are working with a consulting company who we use to interface between community organizations and the government. The process of applying for public funds is quite complicated and extensive, and so they are... guiding us through the process to help us develop our application," Berger said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 23, 2014

Program provides art therapy for cancer patients

SHERI SHEFA
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Building on the momentum from last year's Project Art fundraiser to establish an art therapy program for cancer patients and their families, event organizers this year donated another $75,000 to the Odette Cancer Centre at Sunnybrook Hospital.

Matt Cohen, a 24-year-old contemporary visual artist who organized the event held earlier this month at 99 Sudbury in Toronto, along with his co-founders Ben Cowley, Zac Cooper and Emma Tushinski, said it was Tushinski's experience as a cancer patient that inspired them to do this.

In 2010, when Tushinski was about 18 years old, she was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and spent the following 2-1/2 years receiving weekly treatments including chemotherapy, radiation, bone marrow biopsies and lumbar punctures at the Odette Cancer Centre.

"Right around 2012, when this initiative started, she was finishing up her treatment and she was doing better, and she's fine now," Cohen said, adding that she is currently studying abroad in Australia.

Project Art founders Matt Cohen, Ben Cowley, Emma Tushinski and Zac Cooper

"But the four of us sort of got together and we wanted to figure out a way to raise money for the cancer centre, or to figure out a way to create a program or something that would help make the experience of having to go through treatment at the centre more manageable."

He said that the experience for Tushinski and her family was very stressful, both physically and emotionally.

"There wasn't much of an outlet creatively, or in any form, at the centre, and she would endure long wait times before receiving her treatments, which left her and her family completely drained," Cohen said.

"That, along with a passion that we all share for the arts – we kind of thought it would be cool to get together and create some sort of event where we showcase local art, sell it, auction it off, and at the same time raise money and awareness for art therapy initiatives in the cancer centre."

With the $90,000 that was raised at the first Project Art event in 2013, the Odette Cancer Centre developed an art program, which offers four weekly group sessions with a registered art therapist.

This year, the 2nd annual "Pop Up Art Gallery," which featured work from more than 20 local artists, an art sale and auction, live music, food and drinks, pulled in another $75,000 to keep the program running.

"[The therapist] uses art, painting, drawing, whatever it is, in a way that can relieve stress and help them better deal with the situation," Cohen said.

He added that he hopes to keep this event running for years to come. For more information, visit www.project-art.org. ■

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Baycrest ad campaign aims to raise dementia awareness

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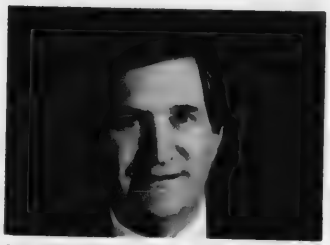

Garry Foster

Baycrest is trying to address the rising rates of dementia with a television ad campaign that also aims to spread the word about its research in the field of brain health.

Garry Foster, president of the Baycrest Foundation, said that while there are many elements to Baycrest, including a geriatric hospital, a long-term care home, a brain research institute and an education facility, its market research has shown that behind cancer, the biggest health concern among people 50 and older is brain health.

"We thought it was appropriate... to start talking about brain health and aging as they are some of our most pressing health concerns," Foster said.

The 30-second ads, which began airing in September and will continue to run on stations such as CBC, CTV, CP24 and the Discovery Channel until early December, present the brain as the most complex machine on earth and describe how Baycrest is working to change the way we approach brain health and aging.

According to Baycrest's website, global dementia is on the rise. About 747,000 Canadians are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and by 2031, it's projected that 1.4 million Canadians will have dementia, costing the national economy nearly $300 billion annually.

In addition to the current ad campaign, Baycrest is also in the midst of a fundraising campaign it hopes will bring in $500 million over the next 10 years, much of which will go toward revitalizing and renovating its aging infrastructure.

Although the ad campaign – which he said "will probably cost less than 0.2 per cent of what we're trying to raise" – is an attempt to rebrand Baycrest, Foster said he hopes people don't see it too differently.

"The Toronto Jewish community understands it in many respects as the Toronto Jewish home for the aged... But taking care of people is only a part of what we do... we have a world-leading research facility, we train more geriatric students than anyone in North America... Not only do we have a huge impact on our community, we have an impact on the broader community as well."

One of the major focuses of the research at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute is prevention or delay of dementia's onset in older adults.

One of the initiatives, led by Dr. Randy McIntosh, vice-president of research at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute, is to build the world's first functional virtual brain to aid in the treatment of people who have suffered brain damage due to stroke or dementia.

"One of the challenges with stroke is understanding how the brain is responding to the stroke. Part of what we're doing at Baycrest is collecting a lot of brain imaging data and looking at patients who have had a stroke, but also using that in conjunction with a new brain modeling platform called the virtual brain, which allows you to take imaging data from a patient and put it into a computer and put it in a model of that person's brain. And then the aspiration for that platform is to allow us to look at how that person's brain responds and then hopefully be able to use that to track how they are recovering and maybe help them recover more quickly," McIntosh explained.

"One of the more important things is that when there are problems with cognition – this is also true for patients with dementia – you can train cognitive functions that support... executive functions, like the things that you do to plan your day, what you're going to do next... It's possible to train people to use those more effectively if they have other cognitive problems that they have to compensate for. That is one of the things that helps in stroke, but will also hopefully help in... dementia."

In addition to studies that have shown the benefit of music and exercise on brain health, Baycrest has also conducted research that shows how the aging brain can be re-wired.

"Sometimes the wiring can help you and sometimes it can hurt you. What we have to understand is when does the re-wiring help you and then in our therapies try to find ways to support that re-wiring, and that empowers a person to be able to do that themselves," McIntosh said.

Foster said he hopes the television spots will enlighten the broader community about what Baycrest is doing.

"Obviously we wanted to brand Baycrest as a place that when it comes to care, education and research, it is really a place where you can keep your brain healthy," Foster said. ■

Go on the offensive against anti-Semitism: Cotler

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Irwin Cotler

A tipping point is defined as the point at which an issue, idea or product crosses a certain threshold and gains significant momentum, triggered by some minor factor or change.

In the view of MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler, the trigger point for the recent upsurge in anti-Semitism around the world was hardly minor – Israel's recent war with Hamas – but the repercussions have been significant.

Israel is increasingly singled out for vicious and unwarranted attacks, at the United Nations and on the streets of major European cities. Its foes call for its elimination, openly advocating genocide. People march in European capitals chanting slaughter the Jews. Times are certainly tough for Jews, but it's time to turn the tables on Israel's opponents and change the narrative that has increasingly taken hold in the public imagination, Cotler said.

In Toronto last week after attending a meeting of the steering committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, which he co-founded, Cotler said, "A consensus of the committee was that the summer of 2014 was the tipping point." The old anti-Semitism, which targeted Jews for discrimination, has continued to evolve into a new anti-Semitism, in which the animus is aimed at the country of the Jews.

The Jewish community cannot sit back, he suggested. It has to go on the offensive, reframing the issue surrounding Israel and its opponents to one that highlights Hamas' genocidal charter, focuses on the Palestinian Authority's (PA) crude anti-Semitic propaganda and incitement, and which calls on the international community to hold Israel to the same standard expected of all other nations in the world, to be treated equally before the law, as it were.

At stake is not just Israel's interests. "It's all about the thing we care about, universal values," he said.

Cotler said his colleagues share his concerns over the recent surge in anti-Semitism, which has seen elements of the far right, far left and Islamic groups find common ground in their hatred of Israel.

A "two states for two peoples" solution can come about only if Hamas and the PA are held to account for their incitement, he said.

Instead, "we have a false and misleading narrative in which Israel is held out as the enemy of all that is good and in that narrative, there is no mention of Hamas, the PA, Qatar, it ignores Iran's role, it ignores Hezbollah" which has 30,000 missiles aimed at Israel, and it ignores the dangers posed by Syria, Cotler said.

The Jewish community has a role in reframing the debate, but he put the major onus on democratic governments and people – NGOs, church groups, labour unions and others in civil society to carry the banner for traditional values, such as equal treatment, in this case, in the court of public opinion.

"Nobody is claiming that Israel should be above the law, but Israel is entitled to equality before the law. It is entitled to protection from being singled out from differential treatment. Israel has to obey human rights standards, but these standards have to be applied equally to everyone else," Cotler stated.

In addition to Hamas' program of genocide, outlined explicitly in its charter, others has also called for Israel's elimination. Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei recently called for the country's annihilation, while in Gaza, Spain, Italy and France, Islamic leaders have issued execution writs known as fatwas "so that Israel has emerged as the Salman Rushdie of nations," Cotler said.

And while Israel and the Jewish People face explicit calls for their elimination, opponents invert reality by labelling Israel a genocidal state and the repository of all evils in the world.

What's more, "anti-Semitism is laundered under all the universal public values... the culture of human rights."

Meanwhile, in the streets of Europe, protesters openly called for the slaughter of Jews. A leader of the German Jewish community Cotler spoke with in Berlin said "he had not witnessed such anti-Semitism since the end of World War II."

Cotler traced the propaganda attacks on Israel to 1974 – a year before the infamous UN "Zionism is racism" resolution was passed – when a Soviet-inspired campaign took hold at the United Nations. A variety of UN bodies passed resolutions accusing Israel of being the enemy of organized labour, of poisoning Palestinians, of desecrating Islamic holy sites, as being the enemy of women, and of being an enemy of human rights and an enemy of peace.

"It is important for us as a Jewish community to leave the docket of the accused and the mind-frame of the docket of the accused and to reframe the narrative," he said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 23, 2014

Merger talks heat up at Winnipeg's two largest shuls

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

After a couple of years of informal discussions, the prospect of a merger between Winnipeg's two largest and oldest congregations has moved to a new level.

Congregation Etz Chayim and Congregation Shaarey Zedek have hired Bob Freedman, newly retired as executive director of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, as a consultant for merger negotiations. Architect John Petersmeyer, who designed the city's Asper Jewish Community Campus, has been brought on board to help the two shuls, both Conservative, determine if a merger and construction of a new building in south Winnipeg is feasible.

Shaarey Zedek was founded in 1890 and has a membership of about 1,000. The synagogue has been located at its present site in south Winnipeg since 1949.

Etz Chayim, which has just over 500 families, was formed 12 years ago through the merger of the Rosh Pina, Beth Israel and Bnay Abraham congregations. At the time, they were the three largest synagogues in north Winnipeg, whose Jewish population has been in decline for many years. The congregation is based in the former Rosh Pina building. Rosh Pina was founded in 1893, and the building was erected in 1952.

Etz Chayim's leadership and their predecessors at the Rosh Pina have been musing about joining the Jewish migration to south Winnipeg for many years. Jonathan Buchwald, the congregation's executive director, said membership has been slowly declining for a while, except for the temporary bump as a result of the merger.

"We are attracting new members, but not enough to replace those who leave or pass away," he said.

He added that about 60 per cent of Etz Chayim members live in south Winnipeg.

Brent Schacter, Shaarey Zedek's president, said that while membership and finances are stable for now at his synagogue, a high proportion of members at both shuls are over 70 years of age.

"As our older members die, our financial base is bound to decrease, and we may not be able to maintain the level of ritual and programming that we currently offer," he said.

"By combining our two congregations, we can offer Winnipeg a strong Conservative congregation with new programming to better engage our young people and other elements of the community."

Dina Granove, Etz Chayim's president, said a membership survey last spring showed that only 34 per cent of members live in north Winnipeg. Most of the rest live in south Winnipeg, with the remainder in other parts of the city.

She added that the Etz Chayim building needs a lot of refurbishing.

"We had been considering three options," she said. "We could stay where we are, relocate somewhere else on our own – but the cost would be prohibitive – or merge with the Shaarey Zedek. We found through discussions that our congregations have more similarities than differences."

One new factor that has kicked merger talks into higher gear is the prospect of building a new synagogue on property belonging to the Asper Campus.

Across the field from the campus building is a smaller white structure that belongs to the campus corporation. Up until a year ago, it had been rented out to the provincial government for office space, but it's been empty for several months and is slated for demolition. That could be the location for the new shul.

Schacter said the most successful Conservative congregations in other North American communities are located near Jewish schools or community centres.

Congregation Etz Chayim. MYRON LOVE PHOTO

"The centre of Jewish life in Winnipeg has moved over the past 20 years from the synagogue to the Asper Campus," he said. "With a location close to the campus, it would be more feasible to have joint programming with the Gray Academy [of Jewish Education] and other agencies on the campus."

Buchwald said Freedman has been hired for a two-month period and shul leaders are planning to hold a membership meeting later this month to discuss options.

Schacter is suggesting a three- to five-year time frame for a new synagogue proposal to come to fruition. ■

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'Program guy' personified Toronto sports

DAN HOROWITZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It was a cold, crisp day, one of far too many that Blue Jay fans endured at "Excruciating Stadium" in the early years of the franchise, when winds off Lake Ontario made sitting though a game at the venerable Exhibition Stadium in Toronto, a challenge.

I believe it was late in the 1979 season, when the Jays' Rico Carty fouled a line drive back over the screen and into my hands. Unfortunately, due to the cold – and my refusal to wear my glove – the ball bounced off my palm and bounced down a few rows, settling at the feet of a vendor.

This was my first of many meetings with Raphael Platner, a.k.a. "Ralph" (and also known as Raph or Rafe).

"Excuse me!?" I shouted to the man in the dark-rimmed glasses, rocking a close-cropped haircut reminiscent of Michael Douglas' look in 1993's *Falling Down*. "Can I please have that ball, please?"

The still-anonymous vendor looked down, picked up the ball, and tossed it into my hands while saying, "Ralph – my name is Ralph!"

That was the only "conversation" I ever had with this unique man who personified Toronto sports before passing away earlier this month at the age of 67, marking the end of an era.

While taking in a Jays game with my son Eli a couple of years ago, I saw Platner, looking virtually the same as he did back in '79, doing what he had been doing since 1963, being the human "StairMaster," sprinting up and down rows of seats, catering to the whims of Jays' fans.

When he came to our row, I shouted, "Hi Ralph". As usual he didn't reply. But it was then that Eli asked me an important question.

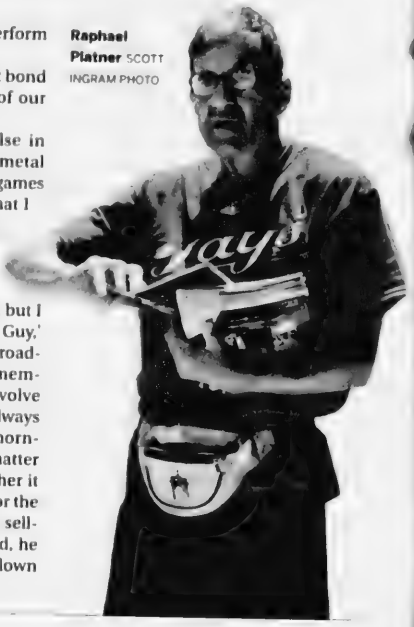
"Daddy," he asked, "How come you know Ralph's name, but none of the names of the other vendors?"

While I couldn't answer him then, I later came to realize that it was because of the personal connection I felt to this relative stranger, a man with whom I'd been sharing the emotional highs and lows of watching Toronto's sports teams perform live for decades.

Trust me: there are few things that bond Torontonians more than the fate of our Maple Leafs and Blue Jays.

Platner and I had something else in common as I, too, used to shlep metal trays full of soda and snacks at Argo games in the '70s. The only difference is that I lasted less than a month at the job, while he, strong as a horse and in terrific physical shape, did it for a half a century.

"I didn't know Raphael the person, but I certainly knew 'Ralph The Program Guy,' the legend," says Toronto Blue Jays broadcaster Mike Wilner. "My earliest memories of Toronto sports fandom involve him, because he was everywhere. Always with the black buzz-cut and dark horn-rimmed glasses, wearing shorts no matter the weather. Before the game, whether it was at [Maple Leaf] Gardens, the Ex or the [Sky]Dome, you'd see Ralph outside selling programs. Once the game started, he was impossible to miss. Sprinting down



Raphael Platner SCOTT INGRAM PHOTO

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the steps, he was all business all the time, single-minded of purpose – just to get rid of those programs.

"Hearing the stories of all the bar mitzvah crashing (apparently he had no interest in mine) makes me wish I'd taken time to get to know him. It's going to be very, very weird to be at a ball game and not see him, but the legend will most assuredly live on."

Cantor Charles Osborne of Temple Sinai struck up a friendship with Ralph – not over religion or sports, but rather, classical music.

"Ralph would often show up at Temple after services, but always just in time for the Oneg [Shabbat]," laughs Osborne. "He was a believer in Woody Allen's dictum that 90 per cent of everything is showing up. If there was a spiritual side to Ralph, it would be summed up by the word *katanah* – intention – because everything he did was with absolute focus and a strong will. He would share with me his incredible knowledge of music, especially film-score composers and the music scene in Toronto. It was through Ralph that I, someone relatively new to the city, learned of the depth and breadth of all it had to offer. He will be sorely missed."

Toronto freelance journalist David Bale, who would often chat with Platner over a rugelach at Temple Sinai, summed up his feelings about his passing with a few profound words.

"I never thought I'd compare shul with professional sporting events, but going to both will never be the same," said Bale.

Amen. ■

COLLAGE BY DAVID MATLOW

Dan Horowitz is editorial director at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

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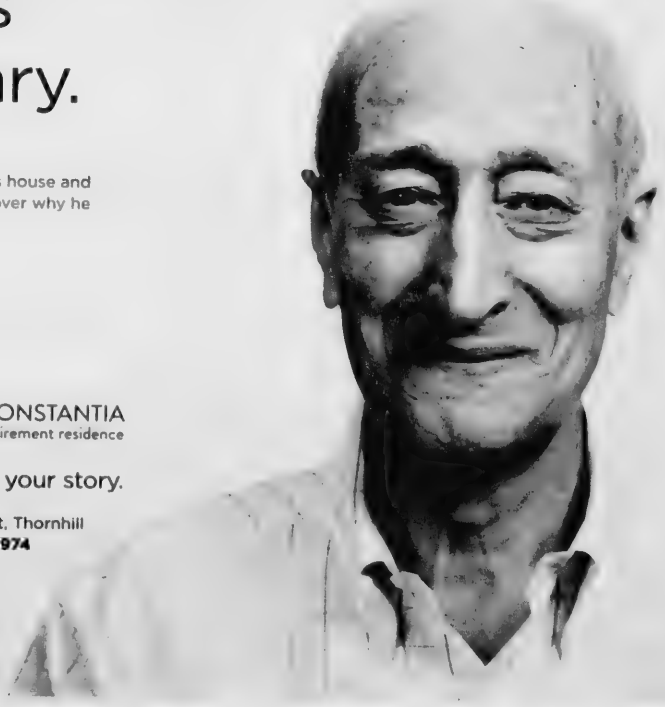

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GUEST VOICE

How Technion will help me reach outer space

Shenalie Fernando

I want to be an astronaut. That's not an ambition that comes true for many of us. Only 11 Canadians have been to space, and only two of them have been women.

The next step on my journey to join them took me to Israel this past summer.

As a space engineering student at York University's new Lassonde School of Engineering, I had the opportunity to spend three weeks at Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

It's one of the best global universities for engineering and technology. It's also one of the world's top 10 entrepreneurial ecosystems surrounded by start-ups, high-tech firms and new ideas to solve big problems. I now know why they call Israel the start-up nation.

With 20 of my fellow students from the Lassonde School of Engineering, I embarked on a specially designed intensive entrepreneurship training program. We were based at Technion in Haifa and toured the country to visit start-ups in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Herzliya. Along the way, we saw much more of Israel and immersed ourselves in a society that many of us read about in the newspapers, but too few of us get to experience first-hand.

Before I departed for Israel for my first visit to the country, family and friends asked me questions about why I was going. First, why does a future astronaut want to study entrepreneurship? Second, what can you learn in Israel that you can't learn in Canada?

The truth is that becoming an astronaut nowadays means having an entrepreneurial mindset as well as excelling in your chosen technical field.

Government budgets for space missions are a fraction of what they used to be, and the end of the U.S. space shuttle program means how get to space has changed forever. It's no longer about being the first, it's about finding the cheapest, most efficient and most profitable ways to leave Earth's atmosphere.

The future of space travel belongs to creative and daring entrepreneurs such as Richard Branson, who has created Virgin Galactic, which will soon send private citizens into space, or start-ups like SpaceX, founded by Elon Musk and led by Gwynne Shotwell. As well, Canadian technology firms such as Optech are leading the industry and creating advances in space exploration.

These visionary entrepreneurs will propel us to new frontiers, not governments or state-run space agencies.

I want to be at the forefront of this new age of space travel, in which technology, innovative spacecraft and economical fuel systems make space travel a reality, not just for 11 Canadians, but for 1,100 or 11,000 Canadians in my lifetime.

I first caught the entrepreneurial bug taking a unique course at the Lassonde School of Engineering last semester. Engineers at Lassonde don't just take traditional subjects, we also take entrepreneurship and business classes taught by professors at the Schulich School of Business, as well as intellectual property courses at Osgoode Hall Law School.

I spent the first part of the summer interning at venturelAB in Markham, a local start-up accelerator, where I gained learned about the start-up community in the GTA and the processes involved with creating a business and the various resources available.

The entrepreneurship program at Technion was the ideal next step. We didn't just learn from Israeli entrepreneurs, we worked in groups to create our own start-ups with guidance from Technion professors and mentoring from entrepreneurs who know how to start a business.

And to answer the second question, why go all the way to Israel to learn about entrepreneurship? Because it's one of the world's most entrepreneurial societies, with Technion providing the brains and the ideas that are driving the tech sector. Going there let me find out for myself not just by learning from entrepreneurs themselves, but by seeing the society and meeting people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and points of view.

The Technion program gave me the opportunity to grow as an aspiring entrepreneur, as well as to grow as a person with new perspectives on life and new experiences to fuel my ambitions on this planet, and beyond. ■

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First Jewish chair named to Hydro-Quebec

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Businessman Michael Penner has become the first Jewish chairman of the board of Hydro-Québec, as well as the first anglophone in modern history to hold that post in the government-owned public utility.

On Oct. 8, Premier Philippe Couillard made the announcement of the cabinet's decision that Penner, formerly the president and chief executive officer of Richelieu Group (a company that manufactures and imports legwear), is replacing Pierre Karl Péladeau, who has recently become a Parti Québécois member of the National Assembly.

The former CEO of Québecor Inc., Péladeau was named to the chairmanship of Hydro-Québec by then-premier Pauline Marois in April 2013, but resigned less than a year later to run in last spring's provincial election.

Penner is reportedly a Liberal supporter who backed Couillard for the party leadership. His mandate ends in May 2018.

Penner, 45, is a lawyer by profession. He received his law degree from Hofstra University in Long Island, N.Y. after earning an undergraduate degree at McGill University. He practised law in New York City until 1998, specializing in mergers and acquistions, before joining Richelieu, which had been bought by his father Harvey Penner soon before.

In 2006, the younger Penner became president, CEO, and principal owner of the company, which was founded in Sorel, Que., in 1934. It now has facilities in Montreal, in Cornwall, Ont., and in Hildebran, N.C., where in 2011 he acquired assets of the International Legwear Group, a decades-old business that was in liquidation.

The rescued factory is now the main centre of Richelieu's manufacturing, and the company is building another plant in the United States. One of its biggest customers is Walmart.

For his U.S. $31-million investment in American industry, Penner was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion with President Barack Obama in May at the White House, one of only 11 executives, and the only Canadian, selected to do so.

In an article in *Women's Wear Daily* in September, Penner is quoted: "I told [Obama] that five years ago, when I was at a factory near the DMZ in South Korea buying socks, if someone had said I would be making socks in the U.S. and shipping them to South Korea, I would have asked them what they were smoking."

David Birnbaum, D'Arcy McGee Liberal member of the National Assembly, underlined the significance of the choice of Penner, a member of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. He said it is proof that the premier is serious about improving the representation of minority communities in positions of authority in provincial bodies.

"It's my understanding this is the most senior public service appointment a premier can make," said Birnbaum. Since its establishment 70 years ago by the government, Hydro-Québec has been viewed as a symbol of the province's success in taking control of its economic development and most prized natural resource.

"The premier has made a commitment that our institutions should reflect the diversity of Quebec," Birnbaum said. "He made a clear statement that the talent of people from minority communities is essential to Quebec's development. But the key word is talent, first and foremost."

Birnbaum got to know Penner during the campaign leading up to the April election. "He's dynamic, bold, original in his approach and deeply committed to Quebec."

Michael Penner

Penner heads a 15-member board, which includes president and CEO Thierry Vandal, who runs Hydro-Québec on a daily basis. Penner also chairs the board's Governance and Ethics Committee.

Penner did not return a phone call from *The CJN* requesting an interview.

Thus far, Hydro-Québec has announced only that is "pleased with the nomination and welcomes Mr. Penner." ■

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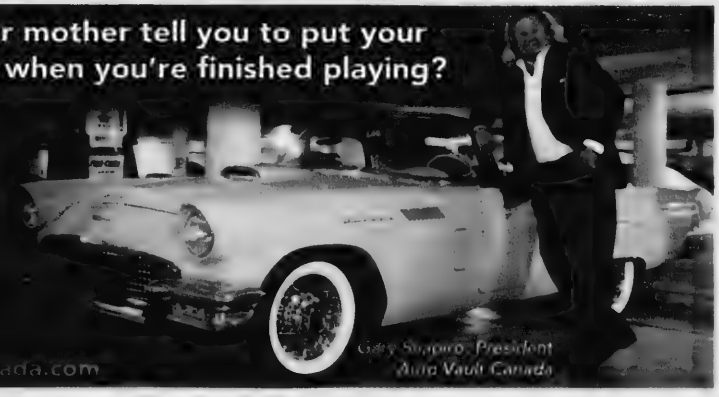

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Jewish Foundation of Manitoba to mark 50 years

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba (JFM) will be celebrating its 50th anniversary with a gala evening at Winnipeg's RBC Convention Centre on Oct. 27.

"We will be celebrating the success of our Jewish community and our contributions to the general community," said foundation CEO Marsha Cowan. "We are expecting over 900 people for the evening. The demand for tickets is such that we have had to add more tables."

Cowan said the gala is going to be a different kind of evening.

"This is not a fundraiser," she said. "There will be no honorees, guest speaker or master of ceremonies."

What guests will see and hear is the story of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba and the history of the Jewish community here, as told through a series of videos and original music and dance.

The musical portion of the evening is being co-ordinated by Kayla Gordon, the interim artistic director of the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre. Cowan said the dancers will be drawn from dance schools that have received grants from the foundation. The musicians will be Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra players.

> *We will be celebrating the success of our Jewish community and our contributions to the general community.*

The guests will include six of the original founders of the foundation. Also, about 100 of the tickets are being donated to longtime foundation clients to distribute to their staff or volunteers.

"While we are not seeking to raise funds on the evening, we have had people calling and asking about making donations," she said.

Marsha Cowan, Jewish Foundation of Manitoba

"We have suggested that they buy tickets and donate them to charities that the JFM has supported over the years."

The JFM was founded in 1964, when 119 Jewish community leaders came together and pledged $100 each to create a new foundation to ensure the long-term future of Winnipeg's Jewish community. The seed had been planted a few months earlier by three local businessmen: Joe Halprin and brothers Abe and Sam Werier.

Today, the foundation has a capital base of close to $100 million and with disbursements of about $4 million annually.

"For the foundation to have reached $100 million is extraordinary," Cowan said.

"When I became CEO 10 years ago, our capital base stood at just over $50 million. One hundred million dollars is a significant milestone in our community's history. This is the legacy that we are able to pass on to the future leaders of our community."

Cowan said the foundation will be hosting a second celebration of its 50th anniversary next June to mark the end of its 50th year.

"We hope to be able to have an outdoor celebration," she said. ■

Have you been screened?

Mount Sinai Hospital, a leader in genetic testing, is offering free screening to test for seven genetic disorders that occur more frequently in people of Ashkenazi Jewish descent.

All Ashkenazi women and men, 18+ are encouraged to get tested to determine if you are a carrier of one of these genetic conditions.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 23, 2014

Friends of Israel Oppose Settlement Expansion

The military conflict in Gaza is seemingly over – at least for the time being. This should be a time for reflection by all concerned on what might improve relations between Israel and the Palestinians. It is in this respect that we – as friends of Israel – are extremely disappointed with the Netanyahu government's recent action of appropriating some 1,000 acres of Palestinian land in the Bethlehem area. This is the largest Israeli West Bank settlement expansion in a generation and makes it ever more difficult to someday reach a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such a land grab sends a message of intransigence to the Palestinians and the rest of the world, and creates additional problematic "facts on the ground." Even though a peace agreement may be a distant prospect at present, it is very wrong for the Israeli government to put new hurdles in the way of eventual negotiations. We therefore call on the Israeli government to reverse its recent decision and immediately end further settlement expansion. It is in Israel's own best interests to preserve a chance of a future peace.

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Vancouver doctor heads to Haiti to teach circumcision

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

In Dr. Neil Pollock's surgery, the crown jewels are the sole focus. The Vancouver Jewish physician has never wavered from his concentration on circumcision and his efforts to hone his techniques so that they are less invasive, less painful and more widespread.

In November, Pollock will head to Port-au-Prince where he'll teach his circumcision technique to two Haitian doctors. His goal is that once under his supervision, and they've performed his circumcision technique on 200 infants age two months and younger, they'll be able to continue to do so on other infants after he's returned to Canada. Ideally, they'll also serve as training physicians for others in Haiti, and will bring his technique to other countries in the Caribbean, too.

Studies have shown that among circumcised, heterosexual men the rates of HIV infection are up to 60 per cent less than in heterosexual men who've not been circumcised. They are also less likely to contract penile cancer and sexually transmitted diseases like human papillomavirus, syphilis and herpes. HIV-AIDS has become the single largest cause of death among Haitians under age 44, according to data from UNICEF. It's why Pollock was recruited to Haiti in a surgical mission initiated by the Haitian government and Dr. Jeffrey Klausner, professor of medicine at University of California, Los Angeles.

To optimize the benefits of his trip to Haiti, Pollock realized he'd have to fundraise $25,000 to pay for flights, surgical equipment and supplies to use while he was there, as well as others he could leave behind. "I want to supply the doctors I train with enough resources to carry them until funding kicks in from their government," he says. "So I sent an email out to 50 friends and family, telling them what I was doing, and within a few days I had commitments for the full amount. It felt like there was divine intervention that gave us exactly what I needed to carry this out."

Pollock has performed more than 35,000 circumcisions in his surgical career, the majority of them in Vancouver where his clinics are located and where he doubles as a mohel. In 2008, he joined a medical team to perform a similar mission in Rwanda's King Faisal Hospital. Here, he instructed two local doctors how to perform his 30-second circumcision technique, one that he says is "virtually painless and virtually bloodless."

Though the focus of his Port-au-Prince teaching trip will be on infant circumcision, Pollock says he's evolved his technique so that it's applicable not just to newborns but to older infants, children, teens and adults, too. This one occurs under local anesthetic and without the use of sutures.

> *This trip is an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the world and save thousands of lives*

"I use a cyancrylate skin glue to close the wound in a procedure that provides for a simpler, easier, quicker, safer and improved cosmetic outcome for patients," he says.

The healing time for older patients is a week and the organ's cosmetic outcome is improved by the absence of suture track marks.

Over the past two decades there's been significant debate on the medical benefits of infant circumcision and whether or not they outweigh the risks involved in the procedure. In 2012, however, the American Academy of Pediatrics released its strongest statement of support for circumcision ever, affirming that medical benefits do, indeed outweigh risks – but that the final decision regarding circumcision should rest in parents' hands. "The Canadian society will release a paper on the subject shortly but we expect it will say the same thing, as they're analyzing the same research studies," Pollock says.

His trip was initially intended for May 2014 but was postponed when one of the physicians he was supposed to train was incapacitated by the chikungunya virus, which is spread by mosquitoes. As he braces himself for 12-to-14-hour work days in Haiti, Pollock is well aware of the potential risks this trip carries, between malaria, chikungunya infection and physical safety concerns in a country ravaged by poverty. "I'm going to try and survive there," he admitted. "I'll be wearing mosquito-repelling clothing, bringing food bars from home and sleeping under netting in my hotel room. But I'm going because this trip is an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the world and save thousands of lives." ■

Lou Ronson fought for human rights

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

He had a gentlemanly demeanour and was soft-spoken. Still, Lou Ronson was a fighter.

An elder statesman in Canada's Jewish community, Ronson spent the better part of his life fighting for human rights and against discrimination. He was subjected to – and battled – anti-Semitism when it was rampant in Canadian society.

Ronson died Oct. 5 at Toronto General Hospital. He was 99.

He was the driving force behind the creation of B'nai Brith Canada's Anti-Defamation League, later the League for Human Rights. Ronson also served as national co-chair of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, and he served on *The CJN*'s advisory board.

In 1984, then-Ontario premier Bill Davis appointed him a commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Ronson later served as the commission's vice-chair.

He was president of B'nai Brith Canada in 1979-1980 and held several executive positions with B'nai Brith International, including international vice-president from 1988 to 1992. He was B'nai Brith Canada's longest-serving member.

Those of a certain age may recall that in 1970, Ronson led the fight to persuade (some might say force) Toronto's Granite Club to admit Jews.

When the Anti-Defamation League learned that the club was planning to relocate from St. Clair Avenue and would need approvals from the Ontario Municipal Board, it mounted an opposition campaign.

"Our basic premise was that any club which discriminates against any Canadian citizen isn't entitled to seek public favour before the OMB," Ronson told the *Toronto Star* at the time.

"Eventually the media got hold of a piece of the story and that brought it to the attention of some members who weren't in agreement with that kind of policy… Some said they weren't even aware," Ronson said.

Club executives at first said Jews were being admitted. But asked to produce a list, Ronson said, they were unable to do so. "Their chief person said, 'Let's put it on the table. We've been anti-Semitic and what would you like?' We asked for a press conference. Some of their people felt a little queasy about that.

"But we agreed to make simple joint statements and avoid detailed questions from the press," Ronson said.

The Granite Club, founded in 1876, amended its policy to admit Jews of "good and compatible character."

Ronson was born Louis Rosenblatt in 1915 in Toronto to Russian Jewish immigrants. He was 10 when the family moved to Port Colborne, Ont., where he first encountered anti-Semitism.

"My first day at school, during recess, five kids came charging across the schoolyard, pointing to me and shouting, 'There's the new Jew,'" he recalled in a 2008 *CJN* profile. "And then I was attacked."

His sole friend was the only other Jewish boy at the school. That, he said, left an indelible mark.

In 1927, the family moved back to Toronto. At Jarvis Collegiate, he was shocked to see that all the Jewish students were lumped into one class, known as "the Jewish class."

"Soon I was to learn that anti-Semitic taunts and jibes by students, and even some teachers, were not beyond the norm."

Jewish pupils, he noted, fought back by achieving the highest class averages in each of their five years of high school and winning a number of scholarships.

In 1932, at a time of strict quotas, Ronson was among just six students admitted to study chemical engineering at the University of Toronto. Unable to find employment after graduation, he accepted a menial job at a dry cleaning plant that was a division of Sunshine Uniform Supply Co. Ltd.

His father, Julius Rosenblatt, had been a member of B'nai Brith Canada, and from childhood, Ronson recalled, he read all the B'nai Brith material that came to their house. Following in his father's footsteps, he joined B'nai Brith District 22 Toronto Lodge in 1939.

He joined the army in 1943, and the enlistment officer suggested he change his name. He became Lou Ronson. Flat feet prevented him from going overseas; so he taught chemical warfare at bases in Ontario.

After the war, Ronson returned to Sunshine Uniform and rose to become president and chief executive officer. After the firm merged with other companies, he assumed the presidency of Work Wear Corp. of Canada Ltd. in 1975. From 1982 until his retirement in 1987, he served as chair of the board.

Ronson was involved with many community organizations, including

Lou Ronson

Mount Sinai Hospital, Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Community Centre of Toronto, and the Canada-Israel Committee. He was a director of Bank Hapoalim (Canada) and a past president of the Canada-Israel Chamber of Commerce.

As well, he was a director of Canadian Technion Society, Canadian Society for the Weizmann Institute of Science and Canadian Friends of Haifa University. In 1983, the University of Haifa established the Hilde and Lou Ronson Foundation for Overseas Students.

He was a recipient of the League for Human Rights' rarely bestowed Special Human Rights Award and inaugurated the Lou Ronson Human Rights Scholarship Fund.

But in 2008, things soured with B'nai Brith Canada. By then a vocal critic of the way the organization was being run, Ronson was among eight outspoken members to be expelled for "conduct unbecoming a member" and was stripped of "all rights and privileges of membership." He and other expelled members later launched a lawsuit against B'nai Brith seeking damages and reinstatement.

The case was settled out of court earlier this year, according to Lou's son, Jeremy. "He just put it him behind him," Jeremy said. "He didn't dwell on it. That's the kind of guy he was."

Ronson's gentle manner was "misleading," his daughter, Rhonda, said.

"He listened and was respectful, but he had very strong opinions and never backed down from anything. He never backed down from his principles," she said.

In his 2008 *CJN* interview, Ronson said his life had been "very rewarding. There were many challenges and we would meet them. It's helped me to grow and to contribute to the building of a society where there will be no discrimination. There have been great improvements," he added, "but we still have a ways to go."

Ronson's wife of 60 years, Hilde, died in 2007. He's survived by his son and daughter. ■

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Waiting lists for housing full

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

In Vancouver, where the Jewish poverty rates sits at 16.1 per cent, Susana Cogan, the housing development director at Tikva Housing Society, said the agency's affordable housing facilities are at capacity, with many families on the waiting list.

"Vancouver has the most expensive housing of the whole of Canada. Yes, there is an affordability problem that affects everyone including members of the Jewish community," Cogan said.

"For this reason, with the help of members in our community, Tikva raises money to expand housing capacities in order to meet the needs of our community."

Cogan explained that Tikva owns an 11-unit building, the Danny Guincher House, where it rents to people at 30 per cent of their income, or if they're on income assistance, at $375 per month.

"We are also building on two additional sites in the city of Richmond. As part of a larger building, Tikva will own 10 family apartments. The apartments will be offered to families with annual incomes under $55,000 and rent will be geared to income. On a Vancouver site, Tikva will be operating 32 new townhouses. These units will be geared to a mix of families earning between $15,000 and $85,000 per year... Both these projects are being developed in conjunction with other non-profit housing societies," she said.

Through the Esther Dayson Rent Subsidy Program, people who qualify pay 30 per cent of their gross family income to cover rent, and Tikva provides a subsidy to cover the market rental rate. Tikva assists about 15 households through this program.

"Five out of 44 applicants are presently homeless, living on the street, in shelters and couch surfing," Cogan said.

Although Ottawa's Jewish poverty rate is Canada's lowest at 8.9 per cent, Mark Zarecki, executive director of Jewish Family Services of Ottawa, said affordable housing is still a big problem for his community.

"A small rental here is about $800 a month, and welfare is about $650 for one person. So there is no food in there. People are going into horrible rooming houses, and I'm talking about horrible – there are drugs and filth and prostitution, there are lots of people with multiple challenges. The waiting list for public housing is four to six years, and again, many of them are drug-infested, crime-infested. We have many Jews who are living in these places and they want to get out because they fear for their safety," Zarecki said.

"We advocate, but it's a general community issue. Since the Canadian government has moved to the right, they have reduced the building of public housing and stuff like that. So government policy is aggravating this situation."

People walk past a panhandler on Bloor Street in Toronto. FILE PHOTO

Advocating for affordable housing in Ottawa, members of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities support the Multifaith Housing Initiative, a non-profit coalition that works to raise awareness and funds for affordable housing in Ottawa, where there are 10,000 people on a waiting list.

Zarecki said that what makes the issue of poverty more complex for members of the Jewish community is that poverty can make it impossible for a Jew to affiliate.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Jewish affiliation costs money

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"For somebody who wants to affiliate with the community, it costs money. Eating kosher food, sending a child to a Jewish school, going to a synagogue, living near a Jewish facility – often the rents are higher in an area where there is a concentration of Jews. For someone who is low-income, the cheapest place in Ottawa to move is Gatineau, and it does not have a Jewish community," he said.

Toronto resident Vadim understands better than most the impact that affordable housing can have on a person's quality of life.

The 24-year-old bartender, who emigrated from Israel to Toronto six years ago, was referred to Kehilla as a JIAS client.

"I was living in a basement apartment. It was dark, cold, in North York, in a remote area," Vadim recalled.

Now, he's living in a building called "The Charlie" at King and Charlotte streets in a subsidized condominium unit – one of four gifted to Kehilla by Great Gulf Homes.

"Living downtown is more convenient for me, because it's now closer for me to reach possible employers, and it's easier for me to move around. When I was uptown, it was more difficult in terms of transportation and it was not the best place to live," Vadim said.

> *Often the rents are higher in an area where there is a concentration of Jews.*

"I think the fact that we have such institutions [is great] and that the Jewish community... is so helpful. There is always somewhere to go and somewhere you can get help, or they will give you information about where you can get help. There is always support. It helps the Jewish community to grow, because we are all one family and at the end of the day, one person's growth means everybody grows." ■

Nambi one of first female Abayudaya university grads

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Nambi said she wasn't sure if she would ever move to Israel, "but I know for sure that I, just like the other community members, want to go and visit Israel. But we are not yet recognized by the rabbinic authority as Jews mainly because we didn't have an Orthodox conversion."

Nambi, 26, is one of the first Abayudaya women to graduate from university and has worked as a youth leader in the community. She has worked with RAIN-UGANDA, an organization that addresses the community's health needs. Part of her task is to serves as an HIV counsellor and as RAIN's accountant.

"I have a bachelor's degree in business administration and I'm so lucky because it is not so common for women in the Abayudaya and also the whole country, especially if you grew up in the rural places."

"I'm very grateful for Kulanu and Jeffery Summit and others who have worked tirelessly to ensure that young women and even men in my community go to school and even to university," she said.

"Kulanu has been part of the community since 1995. They have helped children go to school, sent Torahs, sent Jewish books, worked with the women to empower them economically etc.

"Jeffery Summit and his group helps to raise money for all the students to go to university, both boys and girls."

Rabbi Jeffrey Summit is the Neubauer executive director of Tufts Hillel at Tufts University, where he also serves as research professor in the department of music and as the university's Jewish chaplain.

He is co-author with photojournalist Richard Sobol of *Abayudaya: The Jews of Uganda*, and he has also recorded, compiled and annotated a Grammy-nominated CD called, *Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda*.

Nambi's North American trip is also aimed at raising money.

"This is one of [Kulanu's] ways of fundraising to help schools and other projects in Abayudaya and other Jewish communities in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, El Salvador and other communities," she stated. ■

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'The overwhelming majority of Jews didn't vote for Ford'

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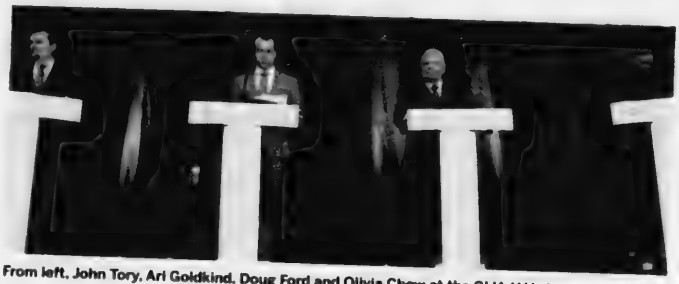

From left, John Tory, Ari Goldkind, Doug Ford and Olivia Chow at the CIJA-UJA debate FILE PHOTO

Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, spoke to *The CJN* about the Ford-Goldkind showdown several weeks after the debate, saying that Ford's comments needn't be taken too seriously and that the audience's harsh reaction was unnecessary.

"[Ford] gave a clichéd response [at the debate], and the audience also gave a clichéd response by booing," Wiseman said. "It would've been more effective to just let him talk and dig his own little grave there, if you see that as putting him in a grave."

Wiseman added: "And really, if he's an anti-Semite, would he have a Jewish dentist and doctor?"

Goldkind reiterated his frustration with the Ford brothers in a recent interview with *The CJN*, lamenting: "Nothing is a strike against the Fords. They seem impenetrable. People seem willing to provide a series of free passes to them, for a variety of reasons, and I'm not willing to provide that."

Whether anyone in the Jewish community is putting serious stock in Doug Ford's attempt at solidarity via stereotyping is debatable. As English noted, "We've never had a problem with Doug Ford's attitude towards the community or to his relationship with it."

Of course, Jewish constituents don't, generally speaking, seem to be supporting Ford in large numbers.

"My feeling is the overwhelming majority of Jews didn't vote for [Mayor] Rob Ford last time, and an even higher percentage won't vote for Doug Ford this time," Wiseman said.

"It has nothing to do with the 'Jewish' issue, or [Rob Ford's] slur… but that Jews on the whole are a relatively well-off, highly educated group in Toronto… These are factors that [generally] seem to contribute to not voting for the Fords."

Most Jews will likely vote for Tory, who's farther right than Chow and more centrist than Ford, he said.

"Many Jews are small 'l' liberal in many ways, because of the talmudic tradition and concern with human values. But because of their socio-economic status, they tend to also have small 'c' conservative values, especially at the municipal level… Tory being a Conservative probably doesn't hurt, either."

Scrapping in the Ward 5 trustee race

A lesser-known "Jewish" election issue is the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustee race in TDSB Ward 5, which encompasses the heavily Jewish municipal Ward 10 (York Centre), bordered by Steeles Avenue and the 401, Allen Road and Bathurst Street.

Of the seven candidates running for Ward 5 trustee, six are Jewish, including incumbent Howard Kaplan.

Candidate Tibor Martinek told *The CJN* that both Jewish and non-Jewish parents in the ward have complained that some of its schools are simply "below par," that the elementary school in the Armour Heights neighbourhood is in drastic need of repair, and that kids from the ward have had to be bused to a middle school out of district.

"Kaplan didn't work with them to try to find a solution," Martinek said.

He also takes issue with Kaplan having barred access, several weeks before last year's High Holidays, to a small synagogue congregation that had met for years in a portable at Rockford Public School.

"He closed it because he wants secularism in schools," Martinek said. "He left the people high and dry."

Kaplan addressed these critiques, telling *The CJN*: "Some of our schools are very crowded, so there isn't room [for students who have to be bused out of district]… Until we're able to expand our schools, either by getting more portables, adding modular units to the schools or adding to the schools themselves with brick and mortar, all of which are expensive… we have no option but to find space for these students."

He said additional funds are needed from the Ministry of Education to deal with outstanding repairs in the district.

Regarding the synagogue controversy, Kaplan said the congregation had been using the portable for more than 30 years "without paying a single cent in rent," and that, with the portable in bad shape, issues of liability were at play.

"In 2011, I tried to schedule a meeting [with the congregation leaders] to work out an arrangement and some kind of payment," Kaplan said. "Nobody showed up… We later sent a letter to the congregation asking them to vacate by the end of May, and then extended it to end of June. Nothing happened, so we told them we're closing it."

He added: "[The shul] had more than 100 per cent subsidizing for 30 years. The least they could do is say thank you!" ■

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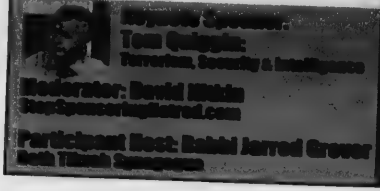

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U.S. plan won't stop Palestinians turning to the UN

ABDULLAH H. ERAKAT
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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's efforts to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will not stop the Palestinians from seeking recognition for Palestine from the UN Security Council, a PLO official says.

PLO executive committee member Wasel Abu Yousef warned that if, as expected, the United States vetoes the resolution, "they will have to bear the consequences of no peace and no security."

He said Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas reported that when they met two weeks ago on the sidelines of a Norwegian-sponsored donor conference in Egypt to rebuild the Gaza Strip, Kerry had talked to him about his plan to restart talks.

The PLO has said it is open to meaningful initiatives based on international law that aim to put a time frame on ending Israel's control of the West Bank. The Palestinians have already circulated a draft resolution that calls for Israel to "end the occupation," meaning a withdrawal from the entire West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem by November 2016. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said that Israel will never withdraw to the pre-1967 lines.

Kerry has reportedly asked the Palestinians to postpone turning to the United Nations for one year while he tries to rekindle negotiations that would lead to an agreement. Palestinians say they refuse to hold off any longer.

Kerry's plan "is trying to prevent the Palestinians from going [to the UN], but it will not. We are going," Abu Yousef said.

The United States has said it opposes what it considers to be unilateral action taken by the Palestinians, including turning to the United Nations. But a former Palestinian official says by presenting his plan to the UN, Abbas is doing the U.S. and Europe a favour.

"The U.S. should not consider the Palestinian initiative as poking the U.S. in the eye," former Palestinian spokesperson Nour Odeh told the *Media Line*. "Why would anyone oppose putting a deadline on the occupation if they all agree it must end? Why would the U.S. oppose an initiative that clearly says once the deadline is endorsed, negotiations based on these agreed parameters will begin and end within a define timeline leading to implementation and end of conflict?"

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with PA President Mahmoud Abbas last July. FLASH 90 PHOTO

> *This will be the beginning of a conflict that will escalate*

Abbas has not said when he will go to the 15-member Security Council. At least nine countries have to be in favour for a resolution to even be discussed, and any of the five permanent members – the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China – can veto a resolution. Palestinian official Taysir Khaled said seven countries – Russia, China, Jordan, Chad, Chile, Nigeria and Argentina – favour a UN vote on recognizing Palestine, leaving two more votes needed. In 2012, the General Assembly recognized Palestine as a non-member observer state similar to the Vatican.

The United States has already said it would veto any Security Council resolution, but it would prefer to avoid the negative reaction that will spark the Arab world.

"By vetoing us, they are standing by an occupation which they have said must end and they will have to bear the consequence of no peace and no security in this conflict," Abu Yousef told the *Media Line* angrily.

The European Union (EU) has sharply criticized some of Israel's actions, while at the same time, urging the PA not to take unilateral action.

"There is growing frustration with the peace process in its current form," EU representative John Gatt-Rutter said. "The EU has warned on many occasions of actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution such as the continuing expansion of settlements, the growing violence in the West Bank by Israeli settlers, house demolitions, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, and actions that undermine the status quo of the holy sites, including in Jerusalem."

Political analyst and Birzeit University professor George Jaqaman says the Americans are doing everything to avoid a veto because it will make them look bad. He says another reason Kerry could be announcing a new peace plan now is "to try to forestall the possibility of having the Palestinian side first go to the Security Council and then, after that, maybe apply for membership on the various councils, committees and bodies at the UN."

The Palestinians have said that if the United States uses its veto, they will go to the International Criminal Court (ICC) where they could push for Israeli officials to be charged with war crimes. But Jaqaman told the *Media Line* that Abbas would only do that if the current political stalemate continued.

"The Palestinian side has not shown the needed political will in the past to go through with what they declare," Jaqaman said. "They have used the question of going to the United Nations, to some degree at least, as a tactical move, rather than a strategic aim," he said.

The Abbas plan, which sets a three-year time limit for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, has received the full backing of the Arab states.

Abu Yousef confirmed to the *Media Line* that Arab states had informed the PA chair that they were asked by Kerry to pressure Abbas not to turn to the UN, but he would not mention specific countries.

Palestinians view the United Kingdom's recent 274-12 symbolic vote to recognize Palestine as a welcome sign of change.

"The landslide vote in the U.K. is an obvious indication of the U.K.'s refusal of Israel's policies of maintaining the status quo of colonizing Palestine and destroying the chance of the two-state solution," PLO communications adviser Ashraf B. Khatib said.

At the UN Security Council, "countries will have the choice to be either on the wrong or on the right side of history," he said.

The U.S. Congress has already threatened to cut funding should the PA pursue a vote in the U.S., and Israel is also expected to retaliate. Both courses of action will backfire, Jaqaman warned.

"This will be the beginning of a conflict that will escalate, and this is what the Americans have in mind – to stop this kind of escalation with some sort of a political process to fill the present political vacuum," Jaqaman said.

Meanwhile, Odeh says the United States and Europe have not come up with a solution that works, and they know that trying old and failed formulas will not work. By going to the UN Security Council, "the Palestinians are offering them a graceful way to save face and credibility. Either they go for a way to solve this problem once and for all or they should come out and admit failure," she said. ■

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OPINION

The keyboard activist: defending Israel in the 21st century

Reuben Berman

While the dust settles on the third conflict in Gaza since Israeli withdrawal in 2005, Israel's defenders are still unable to relax. With each attempt to defend itself from rockets and terror, Israel invariably faces charges of war crimes and must plead its case before the hostile court of public opinion. This current trial will culminate in March with the release of a UN report on Gaza.

There is an undeniable possibility that this report, like the Goldstone report of 2009, will be filled with biased judgments, double standards, and a general demonization of Israel. The impact of another such report could have calamitous consequences for Israel, as the information it contains will only feed the ravenous maw of the growing segment of the world population that strives to delegitimize and destroy the State of Israel.

These groups present a unique challenge that the State of Israel has had a very difficult time combating. The delegitimization tactic, which strives to negate Israel's right to exist through political and philosophical arguments, is characteristic of the radical left in the Western world. It is their goal to tarnish Israel's international reputation, constrain the IDF's legitimate defensive capabilities, and promote a one-state solution that would once again render the Jewish people a threatened minority without a home to call their own.

The most effective tools those seeking Israel's delegitimization possess is their organizational network and technological prowess. The many branches of the delegitimization network make up a loose coalition of organizations bound by a unified goal. They have emerged in major cities and universities throughout the world, consequently, creating delegitimization hubs. This provides local hubs the flexibility to adapt to different environments and makes a unified strategy to defeat them very difficult.

While they might be a small segment of the population, those who seek to delegitimize the State of Israel have had a great deal of time to organize and embed themselves within their hubs, and their tactics have had an inordinate effect upon the public conversation.

Furthermore, their technological advantage provides unique access to the social-media world and its many participants. During operation Protective Edge, battles were not only being fought on the ground, but across the domain of Facebook and Twitter. These hubs of youth activity have been overrun with posts and tweets from those who seek to deny Israel's right to exist and to self-defence.

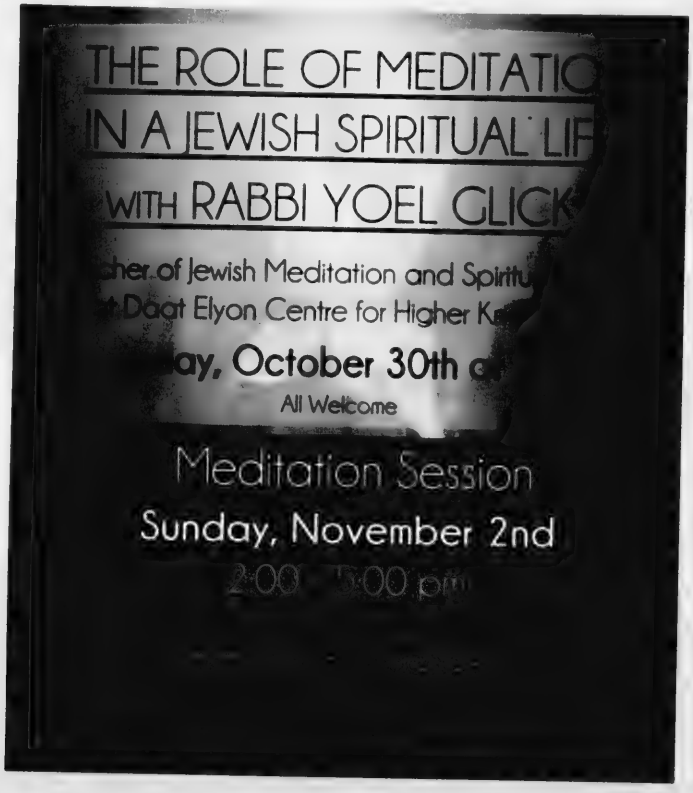
In order to combat this network, new strategies need to be developed.

In January, the Reut Institute is hosting a hack-a-thon, a marathon of computer 'hacking', bringing together the best and the brightest of the Jewish and Israeli tech world to build instruments that will significantly improve the toolbox available to the global coalition of pro-Israel groups in hope of combating the surge of Israel's delegitimizers and enhancing Israel's legitimacy.

The hack-a-thon will serve to help blunt delegitimizers pervasive presence over the Internet. This will harness the yet untapped potential of the startup nation's technological genius, and bring them into dialogue with activists fighting for Israel's right to exist. This union, and the tools it creates, could help to turn the tide in the court of public opinion, and reach individuals that Israel's traditional diplomatic tactics cannot.

The delegitimization campaign has had Israel on its back foot for years, and it is exacting a tangible toll on Israel's diplomatic and economic systems. With our new understanding of how delegitimizers work, and with our new strategies and new tools, there is no more important time to being pushing back. ■

Reuben Berman is a Steinhardt Fellow at The Reut Institute.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Community shocked by charges against D.C. rabbi

RON KAMPEAS
JTA, WASHINGTON

Rabbi Barry Freundel was known to the Washington D.C. Jewish community as a champion of moral rectitude. But on Oct. 14, the spiritual leader of Kesher Israel congregation for the past 25 years, was charged with the most intimate of transgressions: voyeurism.

Rabbi Freundel, 62, was taken away in handcuffs, after uniformed officers and plainclothes detectives searched his home in the Georgetown section of Washington. A local NBC affiliate reported the rabbi had installed a clock radio with a hidden camera, called the "Dream Machine," in the women's showers of the congregation's mikvah.

The arrest marks a startling turn in the career of a rabbi known as a national leader in establishing precepts for conversion and as a strict moralist who just last month railed against the corrosive effect of pornography on marriages. His synagogue, Kesher Israel, is one of the most prominent in Washington. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and *New Republic* literary editor Leon Wieseltier are members, and former Connecticut senator Joseph Lieberman is a former congregant.

The synagogue board in a statement said it had reported Rabbi Freundel to authorities. "Upon receiving information regarding potentially inappropriate activity, the board of directors quickly alerted the appropriate officials," the statement, posted on the congregation's website, said. "Throughout the investigation, we co-operated fully with law enforcement and will continue to do so."

Rabbi Freundel pleaded not guilty to voyeurism in a D.C. court the next day. Judge William Nooter ordered Rabbi Freundel to stay away from Kesher Israel and the Jewish converts who immersed in the mikvah, according to *Reuters*.

Kesher Israel has suspended Rabbi Freundel without pay, as has the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA).

The Forward reported that the RCA investigated Rabbi Freundel over the summer on a separate allegation of sexual impropriety. The RCA never took action because the complainant was not able to provide evidence. An insider said the RCA never notified the synagogue's board of directors of this charge.

> *He has fought so hard for those who wished to make a halachic conversion to Judaism*

Congregants told *JTA* they were shocked by the allegation. They described Rabbi Freundel as somewhat aloof and said he delegated much of the personal outreach to his wife, Sharon.

"He came off as academic, intellectual, a space cadet, head in the clouds," said one former male congregant, a young professional. "The word was out – if you wanted an emotional experience, someone who would hold your hand, go to Rabbi Shemtov," this congregant said, referring to the senior Chabad rabbi in Washington, Levi Shemtov. "If you wanted rigorous study, go to Kesher."

"He wasn't a super warm and cuddly rabbi," said another male congregant, who, like others interviewed for this story, asked to remain anonymous because of the sensitivity of the issue.

"He would answer whatever *she'elahs* you had," this congregant said, using the Hebrew term for questions regarding Jewish law. "He was more than happy to share his thought process from a religious perspective. He was very much the doctor-rabbi."

Freundel is on the faculty of Georgetown University's law school and Towson University in Maryland.

Yet another former congregant, a woman, acknowledged Rabbi Freundel's reputation as distant, but said his compassion was manifest through his intellect.

Rabbi Freundel, a leading rabbi for conversions, was known for his strict adherence to the precepts laid down by the RCA, but would also take care to closely guide converts through what could be a protracted and arduous process. "He has fought so hard for those who wished to make a halachic conversion to Judaism," this congregant said, using the Hebrew term for Orthodox Jewish precepts. "He would not cut corners, but he was a voice of reason with the rabbinate."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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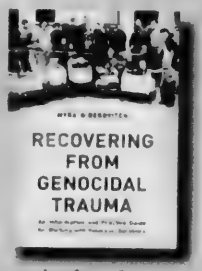

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Rabbi criticized 'lack of sexual morality'

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Rabbi Freundel hewed a centrist line in some of the recent controversies affecting Orthodoxy: he was among the first to embrace the notion of women presidents for Orthodox congregations, drawing ire from some right-wingers. But he rejected attempts on the Orthodox left to create a class of women clergy, or "rabbahs." He was known, congregants said, for dismissing rabbis he believed were his intellectual inferiors.

Just last month he told the *Washington Jewish Week* that the Orthodox community was afflicted by changes in sexual mores. "The lack of sexual morality that pervades this society is all over the place," he said, "and the Orthodox community, no matter how traditional, is not immune from this, and it creates terrible problems."

He went on to say: "Pornography and its accessibility is wrecking marriages. It's two keystrokes away. You get on the computer, you hit the button twice and you're there. I have not counselled a couple in any level of relationship in the last five years where pornography hasn't been an issue."

Rabbi Mark Dratch, the RCA's executive vice-president, noted Rabbi Freundel's role as the chairman of the RCA committee negotiating shared precepts for conversion with the Israeli rabbinate, which in recent years has accused American modern Orthodoxy of laxity in its approach. But Rabbi Dratch said Rabbi Freundel was just one figure in an ongoing process, and that it would not be affected by his departure. "Hopefully it doesn't mean anything, because the process and the protocols are larger than any one individual," he said.

Rabbi Dratch extended the RCA's sympathy to Rabbi Freundel's alleged victims.

"We have a lot of empathy for the alleged victims, for all women now who feel vulnerable who come to the mikvah, as well as for the family and for the rabbi himself," Rabbi Dratch said. "There's too much we don't know to pass judgment, but if true, we are outraged by the behaviour of a rabbi in general and especially in an area of religious practice." ■

Liberal Orthodox Rabbi Avi Weiss to retire

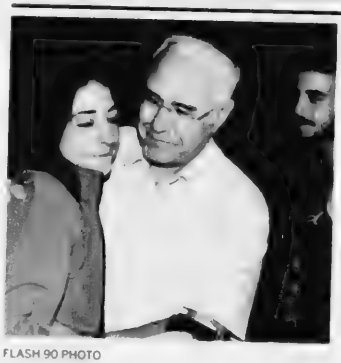
JTA, NEW YORK

Rabbi Avi Weiss said he will be step down next summer as spiritual leader of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in New York City.

Rabbi Weiss, an ardent activist on behalf of embattled Jewish communities who has pushed a more religiously liberal brand of Orthodoxy, made the announcement Oct. 16 during holiday services at the Bronx synagogue. The rabbi, 70, said his retirement would be effective in July.

He said he will continue to serve as rabbi-in-residence at the synagogue, the *Forward* reported.

Weiss is the founder of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, a liberal Orthodox rabbinical school, and Yeshivat Maharat, an institution for women that has graduated two cohorts of female spiritual leaders called maharats, an acronym meaning female spiritual, legal and Torah leader. ■



FLASH 90 PHOTO

Disaster in Nepal

The family of Shira, an Israeli hiker injured last week in a blizzard in Nepal that killed more than 70 people, among them four Israelis, embrace her as she arrives at Ben-Gurion Airport on Oct 19. Shira was one of seven injured Israelis brought home that night for further treatment at the Hadassah Ein Kerem and Tel Hashomer hospitals.

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Jewish Life

The Nine Lives of Peter Foldy

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Peter Foldy fled Hungary with his parents after the 1956 revolution, landing in Sydney, Australia, where he attended high school, acted in TV commercials and made friends with members of a local teen pop group – the Bee Gees – before they became international superstars. The magic the group created at their performances influenced Foldy.

"They were so talented," he said, "so I thought, 'I want to do that, I want to be a singer.' The Bee Gees planted that seed."

Next, Foldy and his family moved to Toronto, where he studied film at York University. He'd always been "fascinated with movies," he said, after he'd had a bit part in a Hungarian film when he was seven. While he was in film school and playing in a bar band at night, performing Bee Gees and Beatles covers, he began writing his own songs.

He recorded a demo of his songs, sent it around to record companies and, to his surprise, a small, independent label signed him. One of the songs on the demo, *Bondi Junction*, a pop confection about first love, rose to No. 1 on the Canadian music charts in 1973. Foldy got two Juno Award nominations for it.

"It was a very commercial song," he said. He added that *Bondi Junction* filled a need for easy listening pop because at the time "most Canadian musicians were in heavy rock bands."

Foldy said he eventually drifted into the film business, but he never lost his musical aspirations, releasing a *Best of Peter Foldy* album in 2008. When he uploaded a video of *Bondi Junction* onto YouTube in 2010, he realized that the song inspired people's memories. "It reminds people about nice times growing up," Foldy said.

A YouTube viewer wrote, "This song takes me back to my childhood. I put it on at least once a week to make me smile," and another wrote, "I was working at a summer camp in the San Juan Islands... this song was a hit that year and all the ladies on the staff were in love with this song!"

One viewer reminisced about his own first love. He wrote, "That's it, you find your first love, you think it's forever, it rarely lasts, and maybe you look back and reminisce. Surely you never forget it!"

The feedback from his YouTube audience got Foldy back into songwriting, and he recorded a new album, *Nine Lives*, a collection of 10 original songs.

Foldy, who lives in Los Angeles, was in Toronto recently, visiting his family for the holidays and promoting the CD. He said that promoting a record isn't as easy as it was in the 1970s, when pop radio stations like 1050 CHUM would pick up songs and play them 10 times a day. Although the Internet does give musicians a wider reach, he added that it's hard to find an audience online.

Foldy delivers some pure pop sounds in *Nine Lives* and he's a master at crafting the kind of infectious melodies that can play over and over in your head.

"I like fun, easy listening pop," he said. "I think music should entertain." And his voice sounds youthful as ever in his new recording, much like it did when he was in his 20s, he reflected.

But Foldy's maturity comes through on the album, where he's tackled a few serious subjects. He wrote the song *United*, about world peace, in December 2012, when the world was supposed to end, according to a Mayan calendar prediction. The track *One of Us*, Foldy said, is about being an outsider, adding that it could apply to almost anyone, including the homeless or the elderly. *Philadelphia on Your Mind* is about letting go of the past.

The songs about romantic relationships on *Nine Lives* aren't as carefree as *Bondi Junction* was, where he sang, rather flippantly, "Thought I would want her to eternity/ I was wrong." On the Nine Lives' track, *In Too Deep*, he sings, "You've had your romances, I've had mine" but "you and me are meant to last."

The CD's title, *Nine Lives* is a reference to the changes Foldy has gone through in his life, from a child actor in Hungary and Australia and a musician in Canada to a screenwriter, producer and director in Los Angeles. He has more than 20 film credits, and currently he's producing a movie about the first band that was signed by the Beatles' Apple Records. Foldy said former Beatle Paul McCartney has given his approval to the project.

Despite Foldy's "nine lives," the music on his new album has an innocent quality. "I'm a dreamer. I refuse to grow up," he said. "I refuse to stop doing what I love, which is music and film."■

Nine Lives is available on iTunes and Amazon.ca. For more information about Foldy, visit www.peterfoldy.com.

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

KIEVER SHUL STAGES MUSICAL FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

After its sold-out run at the Toronto Fringe Festival, the musical *A Simple Twist of Faith* is being revived for one night only as part of The Shabbat Project.

The piece focuses on an American Jewish soldier in Germany in World War I who meets and is welcomed by a German Jew in the local synagogue on Friday night; and further developments that take place decades later, in the Nazi era. Based on a true story, the theatrical book is by **Evan Malach**, the music and lyrics by Evan and **Rafe Malach**.

Directed by **Naomi Tessler,** starring **Evan Malach**, **Adam Jesin** and **Sonia Shklarov**. Kiever Shul, 25 Bellevue Ave. Thursday Oct. 23, 7 p.m. www.eventbrite.ca

• • •

The Bakelite Masterpiece: Tarragon Theatre presents the premiere of *The Bakelite Masterpiece*, a play by **Kate Cayley** that explores the themes of art forgery and war crimes in the aftermath of World War II. Set in Amsterdam in 1945, the play focuses on the trial of an artist who sold a forged Vermeer to **Hermann Goering**, but claims to have done so to make a fool of him.

Cayley says she was inspired by a piece in the *New Yorker* about a real art forger who did just that. "I seized on his story as a way to explore art, the cult of authenticity, the nature of fascism as it relates to aesthetics, and the profound ambiguities of desire and human imagination. This is a play about art, but also about vengeance, justice, redemption, and how what we believe determines what we see."

Tarragon Theatre's Extraspace, 30 Bridgman Ave. $27 to $53. Previews from Oct. 21; runs Oct. 29 to Nov. 30. www.tarragontheatre.com, 416-531-1827.

• • •

Musical Events

• Presented by the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, Israeli pianist **Yishai Rubin** and double bassist **Talia Horvitz** perform an intimate concert in a private home on Oct. 28. The two young musicians are both scholarship recipients from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. Suggested minimum donation, $100. CICF, 416-932-2260, cicf@bellnet.ca.

• Jazz, opera, barbershop and Broadway styles of music are all represented in the One-in-Seven concert in support of Prostate Cancer Canada, featuring **Ron Davis**, **JP Saxe**, **Harbourtown Sound, Arba B'Shir, Gordon Brown, Raphael Weinroth-Browne** and the **Two Tenors, Rabbi Moshe Meirovich** and **Dr. Albert Weisbrot**. $100, $50, $25. Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Wednesday Nov. 19, 8 p.m. www.prostatecancerconcert.com, 416-408-0208.

• *Stand By Me – Music of the Brill Building*, a concert featuring **Micah Barnes, Billy Newton-Davis, Tyrone Gabriel** and **Gavin Hope**, is a benefit for the Miles Nadal JCC music scholarship fund. Tickets $50. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849, www.uofttix.ca

• • •

Arts in Brief

• "**Kevin Courrier** Spins the Beatles," a series of music lectures with film clips on the Fab Four, continues with "There's a Place – Liverpool and Hamburg." Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Oct. 27, 7 to 9 p.m. Drop-in $12, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Active 55+ Culture presents the book launch of *Living Legacies – A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women*. With editor **Liz Pearl**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

• Active 55+ Culture presents The Yiddish Theatre of Moscow and 2nd Avenue, a talk and "behind-the-scenes" tour of **Marc Chagall's** sets, **Solomon Mikhoels'** brilliant Lear and the escapades of **Boris Thomashevsky** and **Zypora Spaisman**. By actor-comedian **Jack Newman**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m. (doors open 1 p.m.) Drop-in $4.

• Artist **Bernice Eisenstein** discusses her graphic memoir, *I Was A Child of Holocaust Survivors*, at the next Yiddish Vinkl. $20 includes buffet lunch. Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Thursday Nov. 6, 12 noon. RSVP to www.yiddishvinkl.com

• Comedian **Martin Short** and the **Second City Players** headline the Jewish National Fund of Toronto's Negev Dinner in honour of **Dr. Max Glassman**. Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Sunday Nov. 23. JNFToronto.ca, 416-638-7200.

• • •

At the Galleries

• Art Toronto, the Toronto International Art Fair, engages visitors at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, North Building, Halls A, B, C, Oct. 24 thru 27. Admission $18 online, $20 onsite. arttoronto.ca (The Koffler Centre of the Arts offers a 20 per cent discount on tickets.)

• Art historian **Osnat Lippa** concludes her two-part talk on "The Commissioned Works of **Gustav Klimt** and **Egon Schiele,**"about the iconic art works commissioned by powerful Jewish families in turn-of-the-century Vienna that were ultimately confiscated by the Nazis. Drop-in $14. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Oct. 27. ■

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Larry Sanders co-star talks about his life

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts is presenting An Evening with Jeffrey Tambor, the multi-award winning actor of film, television, and Broadway.

He is best known for his television roles on *The Larry Sanders Show* and *Arrested Development* and for the films *And Justice for All* and *Meet Joe Black*.

"I've been travelling all throughout the United States for the last couple of years talking to a lot of different groups, Jewish groups, business groups and last week was a convention of psychiatrists, if you can believe it," says Tambor.

"I'm very interested in why people don't do what they set out to do. In my field, I've taught thousands of really fine actors over the years, and I would say, although I have had some really great graduates, actors and directors that are working in the field and some getting awards and some getting lots of money…I'd say about 85 per cent of the people stop and I'm curious about that. I especially like going to colleges and talking to young kids because the pressures are so great and so different nowadays," says Tambor.

Jeffrey Tambor

The evening is all about his life and his family. It's very revealing, yet filled with humour. "I grew up with humour, humour is one of the great instructional tools of all time and I certainly use it. It sheds light on the subject in a way. The best teachers I've ever had—had laughter in the classroom.

"My humour is Jewish, my upbringing was Jewish and all the roles I do are Jewish because I'm Jewish. I was bar mitzvahed at gunpoint, by the way," he adds. "My family had huge senses of humour, I get into it in the show, we had troubles but we had humour. We were dysfunctional but we laughed our way all the way through the dysfunction."

Married to Kasia Ostlun, Tambor who has five children, four under the age of nine, says when it comes to his kids, he's the Red Buttons of this group. "That is I go and make them laugh, that's my job, besides taking my kids to cub scouts and piano lessons. My kids have great senses of humour, I think kids either are nurtured in it or talked out of it, we don't talk them out of it, we believe in humour."

Tambor says audiences at his show will see that he tells it like he sees it.

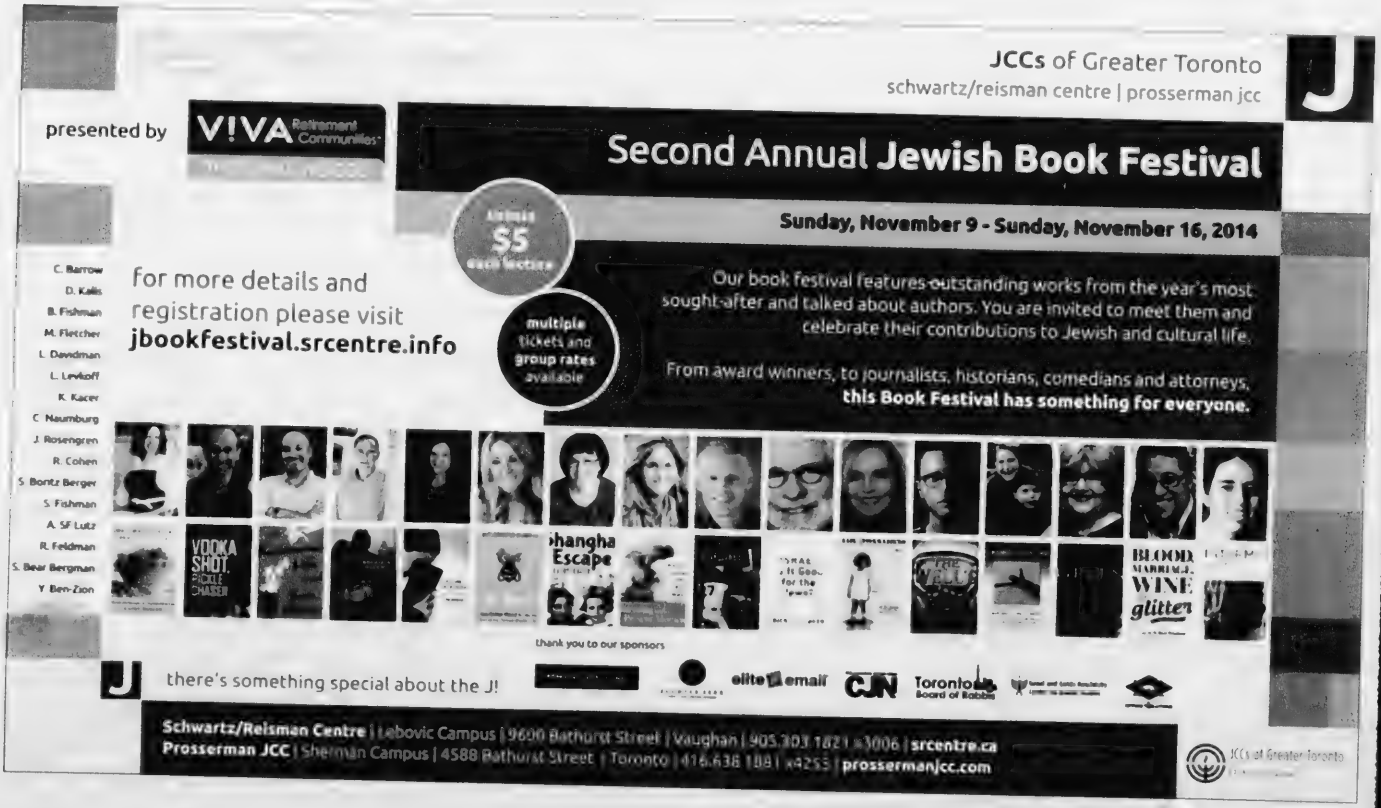
"It's interactive, I work with the audience and I have people come up on the stage and I show them some techniques and we have a huge question and answer period which is always fun. I think you'll walk away inspired and maybe get back to basics."

He is delighted the shows are being received so well. When he meets audience members after the show they often tell him that they are so glad they came, didn't know what to expect and ask when they can see him again.

> *My family had huge senses of humour…we had troubles but we had humour.*

Tambor is currently starring in the critically acclaimed television show *Transparent* seen on Amazon in the States, and not available in Canada as of yet. "It is a wonderful show and is having a huge impact," he says. "We are getting wonderful press. I play a parent who was once the patriarch of the family and is now the matriarch of the family, named Maura. It is the most transformative role that I've ever had to play. It is created by the great Jill Soloway and stars Gaby Hoffmann, Amy Landecker, Judith Light and my best friend is played by Bradley Whitford."

An Evening with Jeffrey Tambor is at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, Oct. 24, at 8 pm. For tickets 905-787-8811 or www.rhcentre.ca. ■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The Betrayers explores questions of justice and forgiveness

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Toronto author David Bezmozgis's new novel, *The Betrayers*, was short-listed for the 2014 Scotiabank Giller Prize. His first book, *Natasha and Other Stories*, won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (Canada and Caribbean Region).

> *I'm more interested in virtuous people who are struggling to remain virtuous than in flawed people experiencing moments of virtue*

Trends in contemporary literature aside, author David Bezmozgis isn't especially interested in the trope of anti-hero.

The Latvian-born, Toronto-raised novelist's third book, *The Betrayers* (Harper-Collins), short-listed for the 2014 Scotiabank Giller Prize earlier this month, features a protagonist – a man named Baruch Kotler – who has spent much of his life lauded as a hero, venerated for his moral fortitude.

The novel opens to Kotler's sudden disgrace, and unfolds against a backdrop of political tensions as he both evaluates and struggles to keep a foothold on his principles.

An Israeli politician and former Ukrainian refusenik who, in his younger days, spent over a decade in Soviet prisons after a fellow Jew (and Zionist) denounced him to the KGB, Kotler, and through him the reader, explores grand questions of virtue, justice and forgiveness.

"I'm more interested in virtuous people who are struggling to remain virtuous, than in flawed people experiencing moments of virtue," Bezmozgis explained by phone of his central character.

The book is set in the present day, as Kotler, now in his 60s, sees his life again upended by betrayal; a proxy for the Israeli prime minister's attempts, through nefarious means, to persuade him to back down from his vocal opposition to a unilateral withdrawal from a block of West Bank settlements. Given the choice to acquiesce or have his affair with a young political staffer exposed to the entire country, Kotler opts for the latter.

As the scandal breaks, he and his mistress escape to the Black Sea resort city of Yalta, in the Crimean peninsula – a nostalgic spot Kotler remembers vacationing in as a child – to wait out the drama. There, he's confronted with an unexpected figure from his past, and left to consider the betrayals he has enacted.

Morality, and why, or under what circumstances, we break from it, is not a question Bezmozgis takes lightly.

"I think about it a lot," he said. "I try to be a good person. When I fail, I think about why it is I failed, and when I succeed, I interrogate myself to see why it is I did something consistent with my principles, and how much praise I deserve for any of these things."

Kotler's resistance to political tyranny of all stripes and devotion to his personal scruples, as well as his and the other characters' various sins and hypocrisies, create a vivid intersection of the specific and the universal.

Though occurring in a slightly parallel reality – one in which Israel is pulling out of the West Bank, and Crimea has yet to be annexed by Russia (Bezmozgis wrote the book before the latter happened) – the questions raised in the story are familiar and tinged with history; reviewers have consistently compared Kotler to the Soviet-born, Israeli politician Natan Sharansky, who spent years in a Soviet prison.

In response to whether he'd explicitly modeled Kotler on Sharansky, Bezmozgis said: "You can look at Kotler as an example of any number of politicians. He could [also] be compared to Bill Clinton, depending on whether you admire Clinton or not. There's this common question of: Can somebody be a political leader, even a moral leader, and at the same time be unfaithful to his wife? Are sexual and absolute morality mutually exclusive?"

Ultimately, Bezmozgis said the central question of the book, the thing that makes it universal, is "Why are some people highly virtuous, able to sacrifice things for their principles, and other people are not?"

As the novel's characters demonstrate, one cannot avoid being hardened by living under an oppressive political regime; for some, this means turning inward to protect one's self and one's family at all costs, while for others it's clinging to ideology or religion, or, in Kotler's case, forsaking all for the rigidity of one's principles, including, to some degree, his own family.

Still, the characters are far from coarsely drawn, and, in portraying schools of thought within contemporary Israeli culture, Bezmozgis doesn't reduce things to the typical left or right dichotomy.

Kotler, who heads a presumably right-wing Russian immigrant party, objects to a unilateral withdrawal from West Bank settlements for reasons that are not explicitly articulated, nor are the reasons why a prime minister leading a coalition of the right would push for a withdrawal.

"It was important for me to write from the perspective of someone who's as hard to pin down, ideologically, as Kotler is," Bezmozgis said. "Someone who stood up for civil rights and free expression in the Soviet Union, but, when it comes to Israel, ends up aligning more with the right than the left. Still, when the government decides to do something that I guess is more of a leftist position, Kotler takes the position that he does…His politics are more complicated, and are informed by his time in the Gulag."

The boundaries between the book's betrayers and its betrayed are just as easily blurred, and we're left wondering if forgiveness, and the loosening of one's scruples, is not the most virtuous choice of all. ■

Sherlock Holmes and 'the Great Game'

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Did Sherlock Holmes speak Yiddish? Did he visit Jerusalem in the late 19th century?

Toronto lawyers Hartley R. Nathan and Clifford S. Goldfarb add new layers of varnish to the exploits of the famed literary detective in a new book of essays, *Investigating Sherlock Holmes: Solved & Unsolved Mysteries*, recently published by the Oakville-based Mosaic Press.

Several of the dozen essays in this collection explore Jewish facets within Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's oeuvre of 56 short stories and four novels about Sherlock Holmes, who after more than a century remains the world's best-known and most beloved fictional sleuth.

The 74-year-old Nathan, a senior partner in Minden Gross LLP, is a founding member of the Bootmakers of Toronto, a Sherlock Holmes society established in 1972. Goldfarb, 69, and a senior partner at Gardiner Roberts LLP, was also an early Bootmaker.

Both are founders of the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Metro Reference Library. They also belong to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and the Baker Street Irregulars of New York.

As Nathan and Goldfarb explain in their book, a somewhat peculiar convention called "the Great Game" governs the international world of Sherlock Holmes devotees.

It is not simply that they treat all of Conan Doyle's pieces about the great detective as a literary canon and devote the sort of attention and exegesis to it that biblical scholars would focus on the Bible. The threefold pretense of the Great Game is that Sherlock Holmes was an actual person, that his friend Dr. Watson was the true author of the novels and stories, and that Conan Doyle was a mere literary agent who arranged for the works to be published. The co-authors of this book adhere fully to these conditions.

"Messrs Nathan and Goldfarb have carved out their own specialty: the Jewish aspects and references in the Canon, and applied to it their combined skills in genuine research and clear expository writing," writes John Linsenmeyer, a Baker Street irregular, in the foreword. "It is not too much to say, in the jargon of 2014, that 'they own this part' of the Great Game."

In one essay, "Who Was That Hebrew Rabbi?" the authors dissect a phrase found in the story *A Scandal in Bohemia*. The phrase occurs after Holmes asks Watson to look up information in one of his scrapbooks about Irene Adler, the woman who has made a singular phenomenal impression upon the great detective. Watson, the first-person narrator, says that "I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew Rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monograph upon the deep-sea fishes."

Investigating Sherlock Holmes: Solved & Unsolved Mysteries
Hartley R. Nathan
and Clifford S. Goldfarb
Mosaic Press

So who was the Hebrew Rabbi? The authors review various theories put forth by other writers – he was Rabbi Hermann Adler, or Rabbi Samuel Adler, or Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler – then suggest he was the ancient Rabbi Akiva. They buttress this argument by citing references from various stories that demonstrate that Holmes may have had some theological training and so would have been interested in Rabbi Akiva.

In another essay, the authors examine a stray remark that Holmes makes to Watson in the story *The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax*. Holmes says he cannot leave London while "old Abrahams is in such mortal terror of his life." So who was old Abrahams and why was he in such mortal terror?

Nathan and Goldfarb review the literature, finding that only two authors have addressed the question before, then assess whether any contemporaneous historical persons could have been the model for old Abrahams. They identify several candidates, including Issachar Abrahams, Hartley Nathan's own great-uncle, and Israel Abrahams, a Cambridge rabbinic scholar.

No matter that these investigations seem far more speculative than scientific: given the hypothetical nature of the subject, how could it be otherwise? The key criterion here seems to be entertainment; and if you are up to speed with the canon, no doubt you will be amused. Undeniably, Holmes's fame and enduring intrigue add a certain buoyancy to the discussion.

While some of the essays seem to deal with peripheral and downright trivial references, the essay "Sherlock in Jerusalem," co-authored by Nathan, Goldfarb and their colleague Joseph Kessel, seems the most momentous in the collection. Here the subject is Holmes's famous "great hiatus," from the moment he falls over Reichenbach Falls and supposedly dies while in mortal combat with Moriarty, until his sudden reappearance three years later in the story *The Adventure of the Empty House*.

Holmes's own explanation is that he traveled to Tibet, Persia, Sudan and France. "The whole chronicle of his three years of travels is three sentences – 117 words – and has inspired more commentary than almost any other Sherlockian event," the authors note.

In their own quite fabulous account of his travels during this period (a section contributed by Kessel), Holmes passes through India, then disguises himself as a Persian merchant and makes a hajj to Mecca. From there he visits Sudan and Cairo, where he reports to the British Foreign Office. (Known to have acted as a spy on at least one prior occasion, Holmes may have been on an "ultra secret mission" of political intrigue.)

Donning a new disguise as a rabbi named Shalom Bayit, Holmes travels to Jaffa and arrives at Jerusalem in December 1893. "Because of his undoubted fluency in German, we believe Holmes could speak a passable Yiddish," the authors contend.

They conclude by weighing plausible reasons why the thoroughly British gumshoe might have visited Jerusalem. Perhaps, as with the famous 19th-century traveler Sir Richard Burton, it was the lure of adventure, the authors contend; or perhaps he wanted to improve his fluency in Chaldean.

Although Holmes was not religious, he may have wanted to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other Christian sites, the authors continue. "He may even have approached the [Western] Wall to stuff a handwritten prayer into a crack in the Wall, as Jews have done for centuries and continue to do."

Although such fanciful flights may cause some readers to emit an "Oy vey!" in protest, dedicated Sherlockians are well aware that such acute speculation is all part of the Great Game. ■

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* mature content

How do we reconcile our differences? play asks

LAURA STRICKER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Adam Lazarus isn't one to shy away from a challenge.

His latest project is to play 10 characters in the one-man show *The Art of Building a Bunker*.

"I haven't had a drink in a month, so there's that," he says with a laugh. "Physically, it's demanding, like running a marathon. So I have to be on my game.

"I think the challenge is often in the storytelling, being sure the audience can clearly see who I am. The preparation is quite physical."

The Art of Building a Bunker debuted to positive reviews at 2013's Summerworks Festival. It is back this year, until Nov. 2, at Factory Theatre in downtown Toronto. Lazarus co-wrote the play with Guillermo Verdecchia, who directs it as well.

The main character is Elvis, a Jewish guy who's forced to take a week of sensitivity training – and he is far from sensitive.

"It's about how we function in this world where there's a lot of fear and hatred towards the other," Lazarus, who is Jewish himself, explains. "There's a lot of demand for political correctness, and sometimes we don't know how to be politically correct. So we're seen as bad people, because we say or do the wrong thing.

"We all sort of build bunkers or fences around ourselves to have a nice world. The world is kind of messed up – we have a lot of problems. I feel like [the play] is very timely. This guy is put into sensitivity training, and he's like, why on earth would we be in a place where we're learning how to speak nicely to each other, when Ebola is at our doorstep? When the Islamic Republic is coming around the mountain? When ISIS can come and cut your head off?

"He's got that paranoia underneath it all, and it's this idea that he's building a bunker to protect himself from those outside forces or the pressure or fear that the world could collapse at any moment. That's the tragedy of the piece, him dealing with that. And then there's the comedy of all these people trying to become enlightened in a room together."

Born and raised in Toronto, Lazarus is an actor, director, writer and producer. He is an instructor at Montreal's National Theatre School of Canada and artistic director of the Toronto Festival of Clowns.

Adam Lazarus in *The Art of Building a Bunker*

"I love the arts and I found a community. I was like a loser sometimes, but whenever I was on stage I could make people laugh… My parents were very supportive, because I loved it."

While Elvis' background as a Jew, and the resulting insecurity that comes from that, is part of *The Art of Building a Bunker*, Lazarus says it is not the focus.

"It's in there [the Jewishness], but it's not the driving force. The driving force is everybody's different. How do we survive when everybody has their own, different cultural identity or racial belief, and they're all thrust into a room together? At the end of the day, how does Jewish play into it? I'm Jewish, I'm totally neurotic, and so is the character."

Lazarus performed the play in front of sold-out crowds at Summerworks, and says it drew people of all ages and backgrounds.

"We had every type of audience member you can imagine. Young and old, conservative to more liberal and everyone likes it. It's very timely. It speaks to this moment we're in right now, where there's a lot of fear in the world about what is going to happen. We're told all these bad things are happening, and we're also in an age of enlightenment, so how do you balance those two?

"If you're easily offended by a swear word, then you shouldn't come. But if you like satire, you should come. [The play] is a biting satire of the world we live in now."■

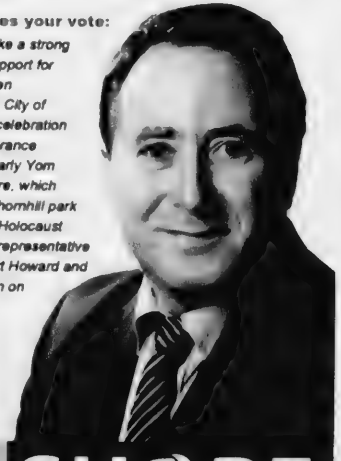
The Art of Building a Bunker runs until Nov. 2 at the Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St., 416-504-9971, www.factorytheatre.ca.

On October 27th
HOWARD SHORE
Thornhill-Markham Councillor for Ward1

Here's why Howard Shore deserves your vote:

"As a rookie Councillor he wasn't afraid to take a strong stand against Israel Apartheid Week. His support for the Jewish community and of Israel have been unwavering! It is because of Howard that the City of Markham holds an annual Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration and annual International Holocaust Remembrance commemoration. Howard has hosted the yearly Yom HaShoah Memorial at Markham's Civic Centre, which this year coincides with the dedication of a Thornhill park Councillor Shore had renamed in honor of a Holocaust survivor. Markham has had a single Jewish representative on Council since 1085. I am proud to support Howard and feel strongly that his continued representation on Council is imperative for our community."

Keith Landy,
former National President
Canadian Jewish Congress



RE-ELECT
HOWARD SHORE
Markham-Thornhill Councillor
www.howardshore.ca

Righteous Among the Nations
José Arturo Castellanos
and the Salvadoran rescue mission that saved the lives of thousands of European Jews

A STORY OF COURAGE IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE
For Holocaust Education Week short documentary screening followed by Q&A by the filmmakers
Alvaro Castellanos & Boris Castellanos

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 29
The Borochov Cultural Centre - 7:30 pm

The Borochov Cultural Centre
272 Codsell Ave Toronto
7:30 – 9:00 pm

Na'amat Canada Toronto

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www.naamatevents.com

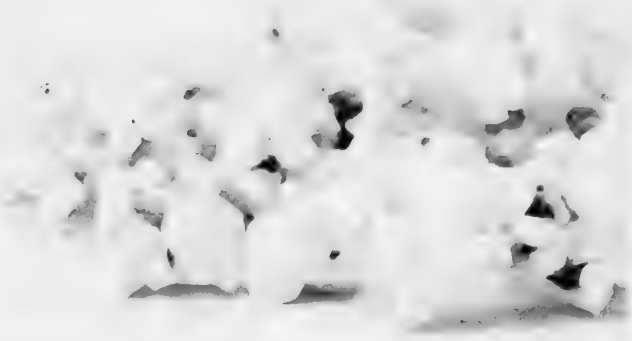
Switch it up for kids

DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If you have kids at home, you know the pleasure you and your family get when you make homemade baked goods or treats. You, because you know exactly what you've put into your cookies or cakes: top quality ingredients, no preservatives and a whole lot of love. Your family gets to enjoy the fruits (or sweets) of your labour, knowing you baked just for them.

Baking and cooking together can be a great family time, too, with the kids helping with measuring, stirring, folding, etc. I've even read that it can help kids with math, seeing as they have to understand common measurements in most recipes.

Of course, that's not why we invite kids into our kitchen. It's to create special moments and special memories. But what if you want to change things up a bit and not always bake something so sweet or laden with chocolate? I've taken a couple of popular recipes, tweaked them a bit for interest and then provided a somewhat (emphasis on the somewhat) healthier option. So you're getting two recipes for the price of one, and even more reasons to spend mornings or afternoons in the kitchen, sharing the joy of creating with your kids or your friends.



Rocky Road Popcorn

- 8 cups popcorn
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 1/2 cup shelled salted peanuts or almonds
- 1/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 18 small wrapped soft caramels
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter or margarine

Spread the popcorn, marshmallows, peanuts and chocolate chips onto a large parchment paper-lined baking sheet, stirring to combine.

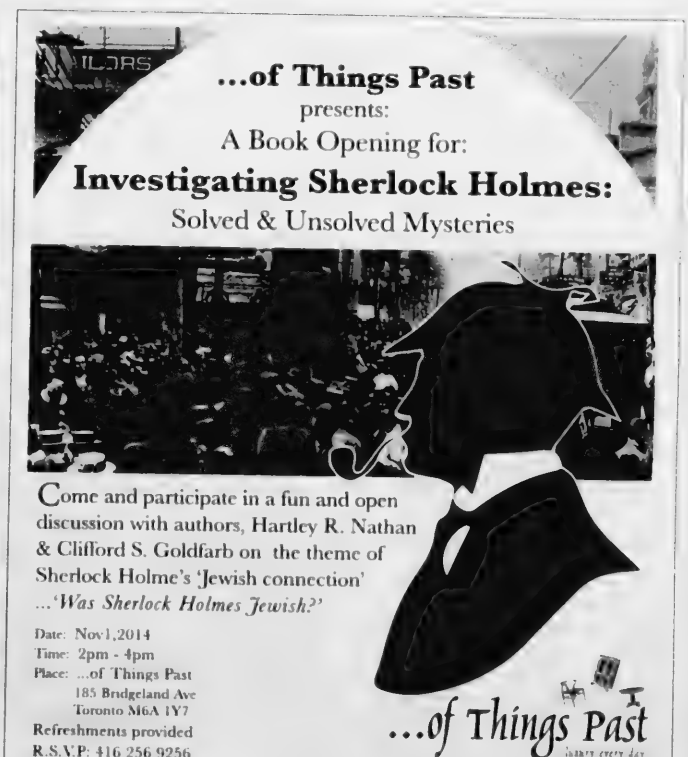
In a small, heavy bottomed pot set over medium heat, combine the unwrapped caramels and butter. Cook, stirring often, until melted and smooth.

With the tines of a fork or a spoon, drizzle the caramel mixture over the popcorn mixture. Let cool. Eat as is or break into chunks and enjoy. Makes 8 cups.

Switch Up: Dried Fruit and Peanut Butter Popcorn

Replace the marshmallows, peanuts and chocolate chips with 1/2 cup raisins, 1/3 cup each pumpkin seeds, dried cranberries and chopped dried apricots. Replace the caramels with 1/3 cup smooth peanut butter and the butter with 3 tbsp. agave. Heat the peanut butter and agave until melted and smooth. Drizzle over popcorn mixture. Makes 8 cups.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE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presents:
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Investigating Sherlock Holmes:
Solved & Unsolved Mysteries
Come and participate in a fun and open discussion with authors, Hartley R. Nathan & Clifford S. Goldfarb on the theme of Sherlock Holme's 'Jewish connection'
...'Was Sherlock Holmes Jewish?'
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Time: 2pm - 4pm
Place: ...of Things Past
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Refreshments provided
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...of Things Past

Switch up cookies

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Chocolate Chip Cookie Surprise

The surprise here is a cookie in a cookie. The recipe calls for chopped up sandwich cream cookies (like Oreos) but you can substitute any favourite store bought cookie. It should be crunchy and hard so that it can withstand the heat of the oven. Feel free to use all chocolate chips instead of white and dark chips.

- ❑ 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- ❑ 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 2 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1-1/2 cups chopped sandwich cream filled cookies (e.g. Oreos)
- ❑ 1 cup each white chocolate chips and semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 375. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper; set aside.

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or using a hand held mixer, cream the butter with the brown and granulated sugars until very light and fluffy. One at a time, add the egg. Beat in the vanilla.

With the mixer on low, slowly add the flour mixture until well combined. Stir in the chopped cookies and the white and dark chocolate chips.

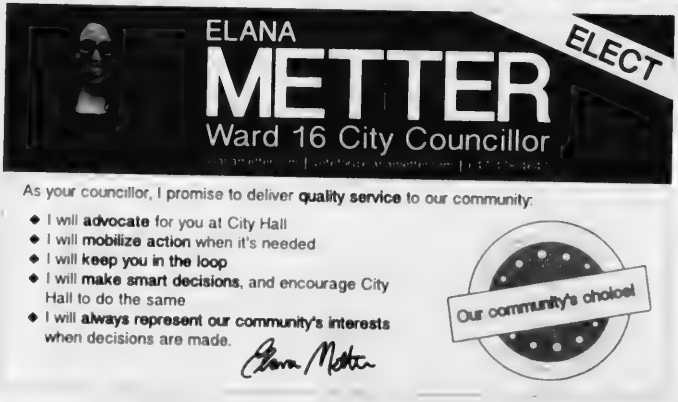
Drop cookie batter by mounded spoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets. One sheet at a time, bake in the centre of the preheated oven for 8 minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack for 5 minutes before removing cookies to rack to cool completely. Makes 2-1/2 dozen cookies.

Switch up: Oatmeal Raisin and Chocolate Chip Cookies

Reduce flour to 1-1/4 cups and add 1/2 tsp. baking powder to the dry ingredients. After the flour has been added to the butter mixture, stir in 2 cups quick cooking oats and 2 cups old fashioned oats.

Replace the crushed cookies with raisins. Omit the white chocolate chips.

Scoop out by spoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheets. Flatten slightly. Bake for 8 to 9 minutes. Makes about 44 cookies.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As your councillor, I promise to deliver quality service to our community:
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Elana Metter
Our community's choice!

Chocolate Stuffed French Toast

Try to cut the challah yourself so you can get it pretty thick – this will lower the chances of the bread splitting apart when you're creating the pocket. Some strawberry jam and fresh strawberries are another option for the lightened up version.

- ❑ 6 thick slices challah bread
- ❑ 2 oz. semi-sweet or milk chocolate, coarsely chopped
- ❑ 3 eggs
- ❑ 1/3 cup milk
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. cinnamon, optional
- ❑ 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ❑ maple syrup

With a small sharp knife and using 1 slice of bread at a time, cut almost, but not all the way, through to the top crust, making a slim pocket in the bread. Insert 1/6 of the chocolate. Repeat with remaining bread and chocolate.

In a shallow bowl, beat together the eggs, milk, vanilla and cinnamon, if using.

Heat half of the vegetable oil in a large non-stick skillet or griddle set over medium-high heat. One at a time, gently dip each bread slice into the egg mixture, coating both sides. Add to skillet and fry, adding more oil as needed, until golden brown on both sides, about 6 minutes. Serve with warmed maple syrup. Makes 6 servings.

Switch Up: Fruity French Toast

Replace the chocolate with 2 tsp. light cream cheese or peanut butter, spreading it evenly in the pocket of each slice of bread. Tuck in some fresh blueberries or two or three slices of banana. Dip and fry as above. Serve with yogurt. Makes 6 servings. ■

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What's New

OCT. 23- OCT. 29

by Lila Sarick

Thursday 23	Friday 24	Saturday 25	Sunday 26	Monday 27	Tuesday 28	Wednesday 29
		Synagogues around the world celebrate the Shabbat Project	Associated Open Houses		Learn about radical Islamic groups in Toronto	

Thursday, Oct. 23

GREAT SONGS OF THE '60S
Musicologist **Mike Daley** discusses "Great songs of the 1960s folk revival," Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m. $8.

JEWISH-ITALIAN MUSIC
The Israeli vocal ensemble **Profeti della Quinta** performs Jewish-Italian madrigals, Holy Blossom Temple, 7:30 p.m. $36/$18. 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

HUMANITARIAN AWARD
MP Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment and Social Development, is honoured by Beth Sholom Synagogue, 6 p.m. RSVP Rivy 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

ADDICTION RECOVERY & MYTHS
Former attorney general **Michael Bryant** discusses addiction and mental health, Temple Sinai, 7 p.m. 416-487-3281. $7/$10

Friday, Oct. 24

SHABBAT SPEAKER
Miryam Swerdlow is the guest speaker this Shabbat at Chabad of Markham. RSVP for meals 905-886-0421.

Saturday, Oct. 25

REENA'S CASINO
Reena holds a charity poker night, 8:30 p.m., Bram and Bluma Appel Salon, 789 Yonge St. For tickets, call 905-764-1081, ext. 31.

B'NAI SHALOM CONGREGATION
B'nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel meets today. Call 905-901-9889 or email info@bnaishalom.ca.

TORAH LECTURE
Morley Goldberg leads the Torah discussion at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Profeti della Quinta

The Israeli vocal ensemble Profeti della Quinta performs Jewish-Italian madrigals and instrumental compositions by Salomone Rossi, as part of Holy Blossom Temple's Musical Heritage Series, Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

ETHICAL WILLS
Lesley Simpson discusses "Ethical wills," First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave., 1:30 p.m.

SHABBAT PROJECT
Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto, 613 Clark Ave. W. Thornhill, celebrates the Shabbat Project with *Mincha, Seudah Shlishit* and musical *Havdalah*, starting at 5 p.m. 905-886-3810, ext. 119.

BALLROOM & LINE DANCING
Join Thornhill B'nai Brith Lodge for an evening of dancing with a dance instructor, 8 p.m., Rosemount Community Centre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. $5. RSVP wmisenberg@rogers.com.

Sunday, Oct. 26

MAH-JONG MADNESS
Canadian Hadassah-Chaverot chapter holds a mah-jong fundraiser, 1 p.m. Earl Bales Community Centre, $40. Call 416-630-8373 to reserve, singles or groups.

MEKOROT CLASSES
Rabbi Noah Sonenberg begins a yearlong class studying Talmud Kiddushin, starting today, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. **Rifka Sonenberg** teaches a 5-week class on the positive commandments of Shabbat, starting **Oct. 29**, Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 1:30 p.m. wwww.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

MOTHERS OF INVENTION
Club Chaverut presents a lecture by humorist and historian **Ken Weber** on "Other mothers of invention," Beth David Synagogue, 1:30 p.m. $10. RSVP 905-764-8141.

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSES
Associated Hebrew Schools holds an open house at 10 a.m. at the Posluns Education Centre, 18 Neptune Dr.; at 3 p.m. for Associated Cedarvale, Beth Sholom Synagogue, 1445 Eglinton Ave. W. Nov. 2 at 10 a.m., open house for Kamin Education Centre, 300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill. RSVP pgreenspan@ahschools.com.

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF UGANDA
Shoshana Nambi discusses "The role of women in the Abayudaya Jewish Community of Uganda," Congregation Darchei Noam, 7:30 p.m. $5/$10.

HEBREW CRASH COURSE
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents a 5-session Hebrew reading crash course (beginners level), starting today at 9:15 a.m. Free. RSVP 416-633-3838.

BOOK PRESENTATION
Nora Gold discusses her new book, *Fields of Exile*, 7:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation.

Monday, Oct. 27

RICHARD KEMP
Col. Richard Kemp, a former commander of British troops in Afghanistan, discusses "Israel, Gaza, morality and a complicit press," 7:30 p.m. at the Eglinton Grand Theatre, 400 Eglinton Ave. W. Go to www.bethsholom.net to register.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El continues its fall lecture series, with **Doug Purdon** discussing "The art world today: Artists, dealers, auction houses and art fairs." All lectures at 2 p.m. $45 /series, $12/ lecture, 416-449-3880.

KILLING CANCER CELLS
Dr. Atan Gross discusses "Killing cancer cells: Can we program how cells behave?" In partnership with the Weizmann Institute, 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 6 is Oct. 27. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Tuesday, Oct. 28

LUNCH AND LEARN

Dr. Ken Shulman, chief brain sciences at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, discusses "Will challenges and testamentary capacity: A medical perspective," 12:15 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

EXTREMIST ISLAMIC GROUPS

Tom Quiggin discusses "Extremist Islamist groups in Toronto," Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

BOOK REVIEW

Marilyn Herbert reviews *The Goldfinch* by **Donna Tartt,** Adath Israel Synagogue, 8 p.m. $10/$15. **Beverly** 416-499-6920 or **Eveline** 416-493-3626.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Robert Walker discusses "Alzheimer's Disease: Current knowledge and care," with National Council of Jewish Women, 7:30 p.m., 4700 Bathurst St. RSVP 416-633-5100.

Wednesday, Oct. 29

PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

Kelly Burnett discusses voice techniques and presentation skills, Beth Emeth Synagogue, 7 p.m. Free but RSVP 416-633-3838.

PRAYER AROUND THE WORLD

Cantor Simon Spira discusses "Musical Prayer in Israel and North America," Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Personal growth through Mussar," Baycrest Terrace Synagogue, 55 Ameer Ave. Free. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

SONG OF SONGS

Hana Werner discusses "Megillat Kohelet (Ecclesiastes)," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. $60 for 10 sessions, $10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Mind-Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
- Changing your ADHDitude, Living with adult ADHD: A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and want to learn skills to create positive change in their lives. Starts Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, Oct. 29, 9:30 a.m., Lebovic Jewish Community Campus, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Walk a mile in my shoes: A workshop for parents and professionals wanting to understand more about learning disabilities in children and teens, Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park** (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Tuesdays, balance and co-ordination class, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Sharoni Sibony** discusses "100 years of the First Narayever Congregation," Oct. 23. Doors open 1 p.m., program starts 1:30 p.m. $4. **Liz Pearl** reads from her new book *Living Legacies: A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Jewish Women (IV)*, Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and stay for **Jack Newman's** discussion of "The Yiddish theatre of Moscow and Second Avenue," at 1:30 p.m. Doors open at 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 28, **Dolly Biel** discusses "Born Jewish in China," 10 a.m.; Oct. 29, Fall festival, "The Midway comes to Betel", 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Nov. 5, **Tomaz Jardin** discusses "The trials of Ilse Koch," 1:30 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- JCC Daycare and preschool has limited nursery, JK and SK spaces for this year. Call **Kailah,** ext. 4351 to book a tour.
- Cantorial soloist **Rachel Shubert** presents a workshop on music and well-being, Nov. 18, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents "The Jews of Old Toronto," Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
- Drop-in duplicate bridge, Thursdays 1 p.m.
- Experimental drawing and painting for all levels, Nov. 20- Dec. 15, 9:30 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What is a Jewish film?" Nov. 5-26, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Traditions and Transitions: 100 Years of the First Narayever Congregation* is at the gallery until Oct. 30.
- Tickets on sale now for *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- *Oscar Winner*, an evening of stand-up comedy with **Nik Rabinowitz,** presented by the South African Film Festival, Oct. 30, 7 p.m. $75 (including reception.) For tickets, visit www.donationaid.com/tsaff2014.
- PJ Plus a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children, ongoing to Dec. 21. Children 18-30 months at 2 p.m.; 2 1/2 to 3 years at 3:30 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the works of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, Oct. 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Got Shabbat? Presented with PJ Library, Oct. 24- Dec. 19, Shabbat family party for children up to 4 with caregivers, 10 a.m.; Shabbat club, drop-off program for children 3-5 at 12:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles, Oct. 27, "There's a Place: Liverpool and Hamburg," 7 p.m.
- Harmonia: Downtown Jewish Youth Choir meets Sundays 4-6 p.m. Conducted by **Yonah Sienna.** harmonia@mnjcc.org.
- JCC Fitness: MELT and Pilates Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.; MELT Method-Full body for joint pain and injury management, Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Watercolour printmaking for adults and children, Oct. 21-Nov. 11, 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** presents "Experimental Mix Media," Nov. 20- Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
- JCC Reads *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*, Oct. 28, 7-9 p.m.
- **Amnon Zohar** presents "Israel the Start-up Nation," Viva Thornhill Woods Retirement Community, Oct. 29, 2 p.m.
- All levels welcome at "Fundamentals of drawing and painting," Nov. 20-Dec. 11, 10 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents an examination of how films soak up political and cultural attitudes, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. ■

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The warm buzz of memory

Lauren Kramer

There are places in our minds we return to time and time again, destinations that offer comfort and the warm buzz of nostalgia that comes with a beautiful memory.

One of my favourite destinations harks back to an ordinary Saturday afternoon 14 years ago, in Richmond, B.C. I was running errands at the strip mall near my home when I saw my parents ahead of me, walking hand in hand in the dappled sunlight. It was a coincidence we were there at the same time, and they were talking quietly to each other as I walked a few feet behind them, enjoying the privilege of watching them without them knowing I was there.

Two individuals in their mid-50s, they looked so happy together with their hands clasped and their heads bowed close in confidential conversation. I can still see the swish of Mom's skirt and the shape of her handbag flung over a shoulder, the crease of Dad's jacket against his back. She laughed and looked up at him with a look of love and affection I knew well. How often that look was directed at me, too.

Eventually I called out "Hello" and we embraced and spoke of our day. Mom suggested we all sit down for a quick cup of tea at the local coffee shop. I likely deferred, rushing on with my errands so I could get back home in time to breast-feed my son. We parted company and went on with our respective days. But something about that day lingers long in my mind. The way the sunlight shone down on her hair. The delicious feeling of watching two people I loved so dearly and seeing them enjoy each other. The stillness of that afternoon moment is frozen in my mind with more clarity than an expensive camera could ever deliver.

I love returning to that memory, because over the next two years that harmony shattered into a million pieces. Our family faced Mom's cancer diagnosis and watched dumbfounded as the medical establishment threw their hands up in despair at her illness. We saw her flounder and succumb within a few short months, leaving us to console each other with broken hearts. Gradually we picked up the pieces, as every family confronted with tragedy does. We donated her clothes, dealt with her assets and tried to comfort a father who struggled bitterly against the loneliness of his new reality.

> *I love returning to that memory, because over the next two years that harmony shattered into a million pieces.*

At the time, I thought ours was the only family bearing the weight of such sadness, but in the 14 years since then, I've watched my friends lose their parents, one by one, many under similarly painful circumstances. I've learned we all have burdens on our shoulders, some more conspicuous than others, and that behind every perfect-looking family is a history that almost certainly contains heartache, sorrow and loss.

Which is why those secret destinations in our memories are so utterly precious, and why I keep returning to mine, a safe place where I can enjoy being frozen in time from the sharp shards of the future, the change that would descend out of nowhere like an unexpected blow to the head.

I still frequent the same strip mall, and though it's been renovated and updated, the pathway where my parents walked, hand in hand, is still there. As I move from one errand to another, I like to pause and picture them ahead of me, in my mind's eye. I imagine their footsteps still etched into the concrete, something of that day always present in that particular place. It's fanciful, I know, the imaginings more of a child than an adult. Still, it's a deeply comforting memory, one that leaves a tingly warmth in its wake and a reminder that life, though fleeting, can be very, very good. ■

Family Moments

Ariyel Rothman age four months had a lunch date with Ima – Noa Rothman and Bubbie Mollie Rothman. Abbe – Shayle Rothman and brothers Aedden, 4, and Orrie, 2, missed out.

Happy 97th b irthday to Grandpa Albert Soren! Love, your family and friends

Mazel tov to Dean & Mason Fleming. You have reached double digits – 10 years old. I love you both. Happy 10th birthday. Hugs and kisses, Mommie (Shari Ann).

Mazel tov to Lorraine & Aubie Himmel on your 65th wedding anniversary from your loving children, grandchildren, family and friends.

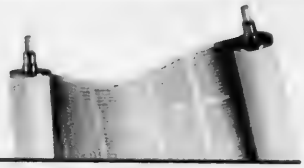
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Noach | Genesis 6:9 – 11:32



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier contends that Noah failed to recognize his own power
Rabbi Denise Handlarski says we must strive for peace and environmental awareness
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen explains how Noah's ark acts as a metaphor for prayer and learning

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Why are we always looking for fault in Noah? Noah is a good guy! He listens to God, he is saved, and the Torah tells us that "Noah found favour (*chen*) with the Lord." What did God see in Noah?

Nahmanides, in 13th-century Spain, explained that all of Noah's actions were pleasing and sweet. This virtue contrasts with the actions of his peers, which were upsetting to God. However, another insight can be found by looking at others in the biblical tradition who are described in a way similar to Noah: they have "found favour (*chen*)" in the eyes of others.

One example is Esther – she "obtained favour (*chen*) in the sight of all that looked at her" (Esther 2:15). Everyone, including Achashverosh, was drawn to her.

Another instance of "favour" is found when Moses reminds God (Ex. 33:12), "You have said, I (God) have singled you out by name, and you (Moses) have indeed gained my favour (*chen*)." Moses reminds God of the special relationship they share. He has the chutzpah to say to God: "If we are so close, then You, God, should show me Your ways." Moses persists, and insists on favour for God's people as well. God responds by saying that he will indeed protect the people and His presence will be among them.

Both Esther and Moses use their "favour factor" – they leverage their *chen* to achieve higher objectives. Moses uses it to influence God and thereby gain His accompaniment of the people, and Esther uses it to influence the enemy and thereby save her people.

God liked Noah. Noah's failure was not understanding the power of personality he possessed. He did not realize that his character attributes found favour in others, as would Moses' and Esther's later in Jewish history. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

The Noah story reminds us of the fragility of this earth. The imagery of the flood takes on new significance in light of the urgency of climate change. Jewish environmentalism uses the Noah story as an allegory for the consequences of our choices today, something that can unite us in common purpose.

Last month, Jews across the religious and cultural spectrum joined the People's Climate March. We marched as Jews, as people concerned about one another, our broader human family and our planet. This was a moment of communities joining together – which also fits with the theme of the Noah parshah.

The text lays out a genealogy of the descendants of Noah. It is a reminder that, according to our earliest stories, we all spring from the same source. Also last month, coinciding with the timing of the march, *Ha'aretz* reported that scientists discovered that Ashkenazi Jews stem from approximately 350 people. As we find in the Noah story, we are all family.

This parshah concludes with the story of the Tower of Babel. We have just been told of the various nations on earth that spring from Noah's line. The tower of Babel reminds us of diversity – within and without our Jewish family. As Jews, we speak many languages, from Yiddish to Ladino to Hebrew to the many diasporic languages we have acquired. We are a diverse group that still comprises only one of many peoples sharing one earth.

As family and community, we need to unite in common purpose. We need to come together to build the ark for our day. The Noah story prefigures peace – it gives us the symbols of the dove and the rainbow. The story of the Tower of Babel encourages us to continue to work toward the perpetuation of that peace – despite our differences. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

As we come away from all the Jewish festivals, full of energy and inspiration, and then return to the material world, a question quickly comes to mind: how does a Jew manage to remain strong, when we go right into the flood waters of Noah?

These flood waters represent the challenge we face of working to make a living and, in general, dealing with the material world.

The answer is found in our parshah of Noah this week: God tells Noah, "Enter the *teivah*, the ark." In Hebrew, *teivah* also means "letters" or "words." Which words? The words of prayer and learning. The Torah is saying to us, "Do you want to stay safe? Enter the *teivah*. Go into the words of prayer and learning, and you will be safe." Nothing in the world will rock our boat, because of our prayer and our study (learning) of Torah.

However, let us not forget that God also asked Noah to leave the ark, and to influence the world as well.

So, let us also learn from Abraham, the first Jew. Not only did he care for himself, he also prayed for those who were lower than he was, and even for sinners, praying that they be spared. And for this, he got them to do mitzvot.

Let us be proactive like Abraham and show our fellow Jews the beauty of Torah and mitzvot. Just as Isaac was proud of Abraham, his father, so too was his father proud of his son. Let us make sure that our "Father" is proud of us, too, just as we are proud of Him. Let us provide naches for each other, till Mashiach comes, when we will see the fruits of our work! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is rabbi of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto.

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20 HOUSES FOR SALE/RENT
24 HOUSES WANTED TO BUY
25 HOUSES WANTED TO RENT
30 CONDOMINIUM FOR SALE
35 CONDOMINIUM FOR RENT
40 CONDOMINIUM FOR SALE/RENT
45 CONDOMINIUM WANTED
50 ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE
55 ACCOMMODATION WANTED
60 SHARED ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE
62 SHARED ACCOMMODATION WANTED
65 ACCOMMODATION/SWAP/EXCHANGE
67 HOUSE SITTERS
70 UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION
75 APARTMENT FOR RENT
78 SHORT TERM RENTAL AVAILABLE
80 SHORT TERM RENTAL WANTED
81 APARTMENT TO SUBLET
82 ROOM AVAILABLE FOR RENT
84 ROOM WANTED FOR RENT
85 APARTMENT WANTED
87 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
105 COTTAGE FOR SALE
110 COTTAGE FOR RENT
115 COTTAGE FOR RENT/SALE
120 COTTAGE WANTED
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124 ARIZONA PROPERTIES
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165 ISRAEL PROPERTY FOR SALE/RENT
170 ISRAEL PROPERTIES WANTED
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198 SPACE FOR LEASE
199 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AVAILABLE
200 OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE
201 OFFICE SPACE WANTED
202 STORAGE SPACE WANTED
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210 LANDLOTS FOR LEASE
220 INVESTMENT PROPERTIES
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230 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
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240 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
245 EMPLOYMENT WANTED
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247 DAY CARE AVAILABLE
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255 DOMESTIC HELP WANTED
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305 ARTICLES WANTED
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325 GARAGE SALE

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 23, 2014

Dershowitz: 'Israel is doing what any country would do'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

You call Hamas' strategy of using human shields a winning strategy. But what have they actually won? How have they improved their position vis-a-vis Israel with this strategy?

Well, they have improved their situation by hurting Israel's situation, by making it costly to Israel. Israel will be condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Council. There will be a Goldstone report putting the blame on Israel, as there was last time. There will be efforts to bring Israeli leaders and soldiers and commanders in front of the International Criminal Court, which will be painful.

They do win by having Israel lose. I don't think they gain anything for their own people. Their people have their homes destroyed, many of them their lives destroyed. They have an option. They can vote Hamas out of office. Yet polls show that Hamas has increased its popularity, in both Gaza and the West Bank, as a result of losing the war on the ground, but perhaps winning the propaganda war.

In the United States, is there any evidence that support for Israel has been eroded because of Hamas' strategy and tactics, and did it affect the Obama administration?

Yes. There is some reason to worry that erosion has occurred among young people and university students, largely as a result of misuse of the classroom as a propaganda vehicle by hard left and anti-Israel professors, who have imposed a cost upon their students, in terms of grades and recommendations, for any show of support for Israel.

There has also been some diminution among Democrats and on the hard left. I would say the same is true in Canada. There has been some diminution among people of the left and also some university students in support for Israel, even though the Canadian government strongly supports Israel and the Obama administration generally supports Israel's security while strongly opposing its settlement policies.

Canadian professor William Schabas has been named to head a UN inquiry into the Gaza war. What do you make of his appointment and of the commission itself?

I think there is a good reason for it. Several years ago, they appointed Richard Goldstone. They thought they would get some credibility by having a Jew, and a Zionist and somebody who has connections to Israel. They made a mistake, because ultimately, even though he went along with the report, he renounced it in the *Washington Post*. He proved to be unreliable.

This time, I think they have decided to pick an entirely reliable person who they know will rule against Israel and who they know will persist in his anti-Israel bigotry that has infested him for many years now.

But this is not a court. This is not a fair process. Israel is put to the hard choice, of either co-operating with a tribunal it knows will come out against it, whose opinion has already been written, or not co-operating and then being blamed for not co-operating. It's a difficult choice, and no country should ever be put to that choice. It's unfair.

Alan Dershowitz FILE PHOTO

> *I think they have decided to pick an entirely reliable person who they know will rule against Israel and who they know will persist in his anti-Israel bigotry that has infested him for many years now*

Do you think Israel does a good enough job making its case in the media when it's confronting Hamas?

Israel does as good a job as possible under the circumstances. It's a very daunting task. I know, because I experience it myself. I try to make the case on college campuses, in the media, and it's very difficult when they skew the media against you.

When I go on some TV shows, it will often be three against one. I'm the only one expressing a pro-Israel point of view, and you'll have three people expressing anti-Israel points of view.

Or you get "a balanced presentation," where you get somebody who is anti-Israel and the person who is supposed to be pro-Israel is somebody like [American liberal Zionist] Peter Beinart. So you're dealing with a stacked deck, and it's very difficult, so I can't always fault Israel. They've done a much better job in getting their information out in real time. The other difference between Israel and Hamas is that Israel has to tell the truth. Its credibility is always on the line and it's a responsible government. Hamas can just put out lies.

Your book includes a very lengthy transcript of your debate with South African professor of international law John Dugard. What was your thinking in giving that much prominence to your conversation with him?

I think it was very important for readers to see how absurdly silly Dugard's arguments were. He's supposed to be Israel's most distinguished critic and his arguments were total nonsense. I wanted them to speak for themselves.

Nobody can read that debate and come to the conclusion that Dugard put up a reasonably well-founded criticism of Israel. He just couldn't answer points I was making. It turned out he knew very little about what was going on. And his view of international law is stilted and rigid, and clearly biased.

He repeatedly referred to Gaza as being under occupation. Is he using a different definition of occupation than the rest of us?

First of all, there is no conceivable argument that Gaza was under occupation from 2005 to 2007. Israel left. There were no troops, no settlements, no settlers, no police. They were totally free to become a Singapore on the Mediterranean. So they were totally unoccupied for two years and Dugard never responds to that point.

He says they're occupied now. Well, first of all it's perfectly appropriate to have a military occupation of a country you have defeated in war and that continues to battle against you. That's the definition of an appropriate occupation.

Second, occupation is a matter of degree. There are no Israeli troops in Gaza. Yes, Israel controls the borders and that's the right thing. Israel should control the borders, because Hamas uses the borders to bring in rockets and dig tunnels. So Israel is doing what any country would do when faced with comparable situations.

If people like Dugard and Beinart say that is a full-fledged occupation, what is the incentive for Israel for reducing the level of occupation and taking the vast majority of its soldiers out and all its settlers out [of the West Bank]? So they make the two-state solution even more difficult with that preposterous mis-definition of what is an occupation.

One more question about Dugard. He acknowledged that Hamas rockets were aimed indiscriminately at civilian targets, but he said the tunnels were used for military attacks only. What did you make of that?

He drinks the Kool-Aid. He buys the whole package. Anything that Hamas says, he agrees with. And Hamas has said that so far, they have only managed to capture soldiers. But the tunnel I was in, which was the stimulus for me writing the book, was just yards away from a kindergarten with 57 Israeli children and no significant military presence. Clearly the tunnel was designed to kill and kidnap as many Israelis as possible, civilian, military, whatever. But they're still unlawful. It's unlawful to kidnap a soldier and hold him the way Gilad Schalit was held, without access to the Red Cross, without prisoner of war status. They held him like the Mafia would hold a kidnap victim.

Dugard is wrong as a matter of fact and he's wrong as a matter of law. ■

Montreal 'Top Gun' died for Israel

Backstory

EROL ARAF

One of the most successful and decorated World War II pilots, Montreal-born George Frederic "Buzz" Beurling, was killed mysteriously while flying to Israel to join the War of Independence in 1948.

Beurling was, without a shadow of doubt, among the most accomplished fighter pilots in military aviation. Known as the "Falcon of Malta," he played a major role in preventing Hitler and Mussolini from occupying the island and turning the western Mediterranean into an Axis lake. Beurling and his fellow pilots fought valiantly against all odds as waves of enemy war planes tried to force Malta into submission. Each Nazi assault was confronted and repulsed with the defiant roar of Spitfires resulting in the decimation of the Luftwaffe and the Regia Aeronautica Italiana. Buzz alone shot down 27 Axis war planes in two weeks in 1942.

Winston Churchill's immortal commendation issued after the Battle of Britain in 1940 that "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few" found new resonance as the Pact of Steel's Maltese dreams were shattered.

After the war, as Israel's War of Independence was about to start, Beurling felt deeply that Arab threats to destroy the fledgling Jewish state would amount to granting Hitler a posthumous victory. Without hesitation, Beurling decided to take to the skies yet again and help Israel survive.

This did not come as a surprise to Beurling's brother, Rick, who told Itay Itamar, writing for the *Israel Air Force Journal*, that the family had been brought up on Holy Scriptures and that both he and his brother shared a Judeo-Christian world view.

"We very much identified with the history of the people of Israel. Our father always said that one day Israel would become an independent state, and we always waited for it to happen," Rick recalled. "I think that after George's experience in World War II, together with the fact that Israel was about to become a nation, he ran to help. Even though he wasn't Jewish, he had a Jewish heart."

Beurling's first operation was to bring a Norseman plane from Italy to Israel on May 20, 1948. But, the plane exploded and crashed in mysterious circumstances in Rome. Many believe the plane was sabotaged before it took off. Beurling was 27 years old when he died.

His charred remains were unclaimed and kept in a warehouse in the Verano Monumental Cemetery for five months. Eventually, Beurling, the romantic war hero, was interred in Rome's Protestant Memorial Garden, appropriately enough, between the graves of poets Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.

Although we don't have access to all the relevant documents, the suspicious circumstances concerning the crash have been discussed in many books including Brian Nolan's *The Buzz Beurling Story*. Suffice to note that the World War II ace had many powerful foes: pro-Arab western secret services were fiercely opposed to his activities, Rome was full of Nazis signing up to fight with the Arabs, remnants of the SS were sworn to settle scores with the "Maltese Falcon," and Arab intelligence services were determined to prevent nascent Israel from attaining air superiority, especially as Beurling was about to fly the vaunted P-51 Mustang fighter in defending Israel.

> *Even though he wasn't Jewish, he had a Jewish heart.*

At the suggestion of the State of Israel and with the wholehearted support of the Beurling family, on Nov. 9, 1950, Beurling's remains were brought from Italy to Israel. He was laid to eternal rest with full military honours in a Christian cemetery in Haifa.

Capt. Percy "Laddie" Lucas, a former commander of Beurling in Malta, remembered clearly that he was "untidy, with a shock of tousled hair, penetrating blue eyes, smiled a lot, was highly strung, brash and outspoken... something of a rebel."

But the James Dean of Canadian fighter pilots was a rebel with a cause. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Belle Kruger	Oct 3/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Rosa Saber	Oct 5/14	70 Humberline Drive
Jerry Block	Oct 6/14	205 Cummer Avenue
Madelyn Gold	Oct 5/14	2 Ann Dale Drive
Lynne Halpern	Oct 1/14	2 Mellowood Drive
Lou Ronson	Oct 5/14	77 Dunfield Avenue
Adam Wiseman	Oct 7/14	320 Tweedsmuir Avenue
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The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
PETER SILVERMAN ז"ל
will take place
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Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
5991 Bathurst Street
Farband Of Lithuanian Jews Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend
7300 Yonge Street, Function Room, Thornhill, Ont

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HYMAN SABLE ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, October 26th at 11:00 a.m.
Mount Sinai Cemetery
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Beth Lida Section
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Inside

Community reacts to Ottawa attack

Jewish institutions placed on alert. **PAGE 12**
Comment. **PAGES 6 and 10**

Former Soviet Jews gather for Limmud FSU

First Canadian conference attracts 400 Russian-speakers to explore identity. **PAGE 17**

Light Lights

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:46 p.m.	6:49 p.m.
Montreal	5:24 p.m.	6:27 p.m.
Toronto	5:51p.m.	6:53 p.m.
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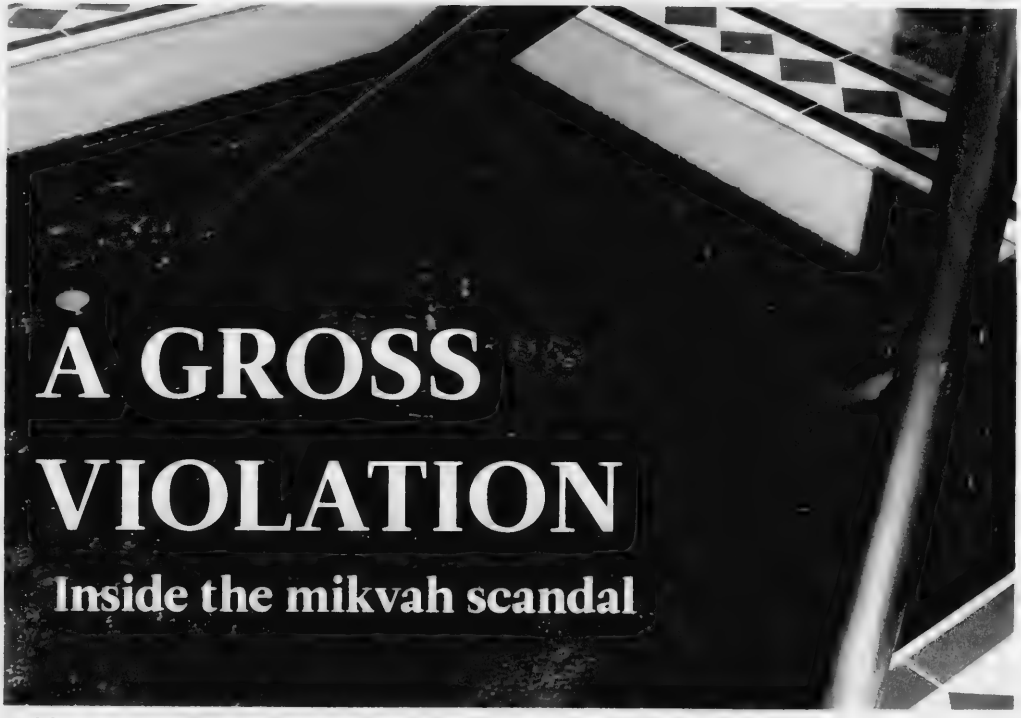

A GROSS VIOLATION

Inside the mikvah scandal

Rabbis are not God: A lesson from the Freundel case. **PAGE 8**

Canadian mikvahs reassure patrons. **PAGE 12**

How Jewish groups got the story right... and wrong. **PAGE 14**

Shabbat Project comes to Toronto

Dozens of shuls take part, events draw thousands. **PAGE 20**
See also Rabbi-2-Rabbi **PAGE 4**

A look at Nazi collaborators

Annual Holocaust Education Week runs Nov. 2 to 9. **PAGE 22**

Opera an insult, daughters say

Death of Klinghoffer reopens old wounds in New York City. **PAGE 42**

Another haredi airline delay, and French Jewish leader called out

We didn't want him, anyway

It turns out Jack the Ripper may not have been Jewish after all. A book published last month titled *Naming Jack the Ripper* identified the 19th-century London serial killer as Aaron Kosminski, a 23-year-old Jewish immigrant barber. Authored by Russell Edwards, an amateur Jack the Ripper sleuth, the book based its claim on DNA analysis by molecular biologist Jari Louhelainen. But now other leading scientists are contending the analysis was based on a "fundamental error." Louhelainen, whose work hasn't been peer-reviewed, is accused of making an "error of nomenclature," which could mean the DNA examined wasn't from one of the Ripper's victims, as claimed.

Delta flight arrives late

A Delta Airlines flight to Israel was delayed last week after haredi men and women deplaned rather than sit next to members of the opposite sex. The Oct. 20 evening flight from New York's Kennedy Airport arrived in Tel Aviv more than an hour late the next afternoon. It's not known if the passengers' fares were refunded. In September, an El Al flight that landed in Israel on Erev Rosh Hashanah was delayed in New York after haredi men assigned to sit next to women tried to switch seats.

Roger Cukierman survived the Holocaust.

Comedian's critic indicted

Roger Cukierman, a Holocaust survivor and president of France's largest Jewish group, says he's been indicted for calling comic Dieudonné M'bala M'bala a "professional anti-Semite." Cukierman, who heads the CRIF umbrella of French Jewish communities and organizations, announced the indictment on the CRIF website. Dieudonné has 10 convictions for inciting racial hatred against Jews. He also invented the quenelle salute, which critics call an inverted Nazi gesture, and the term "*shoanas*," a mashup of the Hebrew word for the Holocaust and the French word for pineapple, which is used to suggest the Shoah never happened without explicitly violating France's laws against doing so. Indictments are "quasi-automatic" in France when police receive complaints of defamation ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

$4,000

The value of the fine levied by the Israel Football Association against the Israeli-Arab soccer team Bnei Sakhnin for honouring former MK Azmi Bishara, who fled Israel amid accusations of treason.

2,000 years

The age of a stone, unveiled last week, found near Jerusalem's Damascus Gate and dedicated to the Roman emperor Hadrian.

Quotable

It's a gross violation of rabbinic privilege.

— Rabbi Daniel Korobkin on mikvah voyeurism charges in Washington D.C. More on page 12

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Thinking of becoming a vegetarian? Our columnist Mark Mietkiewicz can get you started on your research.

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Letters to the Editor

Rabbinic dialogue cheered

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua's letter ("On rabbis talking to rabbis," Oct.15) informs us that one Orthodox rabbi was against other Orthodox rabbis "engaging in religious dialogue with non-Orthodox rabbis."

On the very next page, the Rabbi2-Rabbi feature had a superb discussion between rabbis Yael Splansky (Reform) and Mark Fishman (Orthodox) on the views of Franz Rosenzweig and Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin which was about the role of Torah in Jewish teaching. Anyone who read it would have been somewhat enlightened, and the two rabbis put forth their arguments wonderfully and very respectfully.

Bravo to *The CJN* for this sort of discussion among Jews of different outlooks. We are all better off taking the approach of civilized discussion, as opposed to bigoted judgment among ourselves.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Journal not attacking Israel

Mike Fegelman's gratuitous attack on *Canadian Medical Association Journal's* deputy editor Dr. Matthew Stanbrook is misleading and not helpful to Israel or its supporters ("Medical journal engages in crass anti-Israel propaganda," Oct. 15.) Fegelman asks "why the selective focus on Gazan children." Stanbrook made clear that the initiative arose solely because of the leadership of Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Gaza physician living in Canada.

Stanbrook wrote that he hopes Abuelaish's example "will inspire other champions... for those injured... in their home countries... some in far greater numbers than Gaza."

Fegelman scolds Stanbrook for "only obliquely acknowledging Israeli casualties." Yet Stanbrook wrote that "Tragedy is not exclusive to one side of the conflict, nor is it a numbers game." He then catalogued the number of Israelis killed, and unlike most other journalists made no distinction between Israeli soldiers and civilians.

Fegelman talks of the psychological trauma endured by Israeli children, accusing Stanbrook of ignoring such trauma. But Stanbrook wrote that the "psychological impacts of war are widespread on both sides."

It is Fegelman who is engaging in crass propaganda. He need not look for enemies where none exist. Israel has enough enemies already.

Dr. Philip Berger
Toronto

Sit down and buckle up

If Air Canada were to offer at a premium Jew-free rows to its passengers, this paper would quite rightly be long and loud in its opposition. The dignity of women deserves similar respect. Instead, the editor proposes that a solution to the problem of haredi men refusing to take their assigned seats next to women on El Al flights is to allow men to pay extra for the guarantee that their seatmates would not be women ("A solution to flying the not-so friendly skies," Oct. 8).

Such a move would result in the market sending a clear and offensive message that women-free spaces are a valuable good.

A better option is to impose heavy minute-by-minute fines on a passenger who refuses to sit in his assigned seat until he either buckles up or disembarks. The proceeds from these fines should be directed to organizations that fight sexism.

Rabbi Catharine Clark
London, Ont.

Challenging poverty

I applaud your extensive coverage of poverty. Sad to say, poverty remains a serious concern throughout Canada for too many Jews and non-Jews. And why no mention of those who are blessed with immense good fortune and have a moral duty to share? True we are blessed that there are many who have been caring and generous, but their humanitarian example needs to be followed by many more.

The CJN should follow up with the question posed on the cover "What are we going to do about it?" with our politicians. This could also help to spearhead a nationwide concern – the growing gap between Jewish and non-Jewish rich and poor.

Monty Mazin
Toronto

Correction

Felicia Carmelly was misidentified in the Oct. 15 letters. She is the founder and first president of the Transnistria Survivors' Association.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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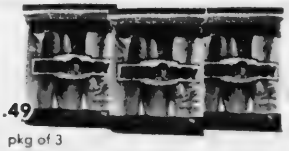
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RABBI·2·RABBI

Coming together on the Sabbath

Did the Shabbat Project show that we're one people, capable of doing things the same way in unison from time to time, or did it suggest that there's only one right way to be Jewish?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Korobkin: This past Shabbat, Jews from communities worldwide participated in the Shabbat Project, an initiative started by the chief rabbi of South Africa to encourage as many Jews as possible from around the world to observe a traditional Shabbat according to Halachah. Did your congregation participate in this project?

Rabbi Grushcow: Here in Montreal, no one approached our synagogue to invite us, and the synagogues involved all seemed to be Orthodox. As it happens, though, this past Shabbat we were extremely fortunate to have Anat Hoffman as our invited guest. As chair of Women of the Wall and executive director of the Israel Religious Action Centre, she is a powerful voice for religious pluralism in Israel and around the world.

I would have loved to have offered that for a city-wide Shabbat Project. The Shabbat Project, however, currently excludes many Jews by suggesting that the only true way to observe Shabbat is a halachic one. I reject the idea that the only way to authentic Judaism is through halachic observance. I love the idea of encouraging all Jews to take Shabbat seriously, but there has never been only one right way to be Jewish.

Rabbi Korobkin: The goal of the Shabbat Project in Toronto was to encourage everyone to observe a halachic Shabbat. It wasn't geared to just Orthodox Jews or congregations, and several Reform congregations participated here. I'm saddened that this apparently didn't happen in Montreal.

I'm also troubled by your assertion that the call for everyone to observe a halachic Shabbat together is not "pluralistic." Does pluralism mean that it's wrong for everyone to do something together? While I certainly appreciate that different Jews observe Shabbat in different ways, what's wrong with inviting every single Jew – Orthodox, Reform, secular, etc. – to observe Shabbat together the same way for just one Shabbat?

That wouldn't be an admission that there's only one way to observe Judaism, just a sign of solidarity, that we're one people, capable of doing things the same way together from time to time. Forgive me, but it almost sounds like "Halachah" is a dirty word to you! What great tenet of "pluralism" is being violated by a Jew deciding not to answer his phone or email for one Shabbat?

Rabbi Grushcow: I love the thought of doing things together, and Halachah is not a dirty word. However, Halachah is not the structure that defines most Jewish lives. Many Jews across the religious spectrum really resonate with the idea of unplugging on Shabbat, and I'm all in favour of that. But not tearing toilet paper, as the Shabbat Project suggests in its online guide, or having a challah bake that is only for women? These practices are not in keeping with all of our values (not to mention that my father bakes a fantastic challah).

I would love to see a project that really explores the many places where we can meet and celebrate together. Here in Montreal, the rabbis have positive relationships with each other. We teach in each other's synagogues and connect at communal events. But I wouldn't have the chutzpah to suggest that the way my community observes Shabbat should be followed by my colleagues.

One of our congregants, who lives in a chassidic neighbourhood, was approached by an Orthodox Jew who suggested that she send each of her three sons to chassidic homes this past Shabbat so they could observe a "real" Shabbat. This is a congregant whose children became bnei mitzvah here, who brings them to our Torah school every Shabbat, and who is a dedicated leader and committed Reform Jew. To suggest that her family doesn't know what Shabbat is all about simply because they don't observe it in a traditional manner is offensive.

That our synagogue was not asked to participate in a communal Shabbat project is problematic. If we really want to encourage making Shabbat part of people's lives, there are so many creative ways to do it. And if we want to focus on Jewish togetherness, perhaps we would benefit if we all went to each other's synagogues once in a while. If nothing else, hopefully this project – and our conversation – will push people to think a little deeper about what Shabbat, and community, are all about. ■

Every winter, we like to go down south. Who needs the cold at our age? Last year, we signed up for the Benjamin's Funeral Service Listings email. It gives us peace of mind to know that if someone in our community dies, we won't miss the chance to send our condolences. Benjamin's updates us every day – a free service that helps us stay in touch.

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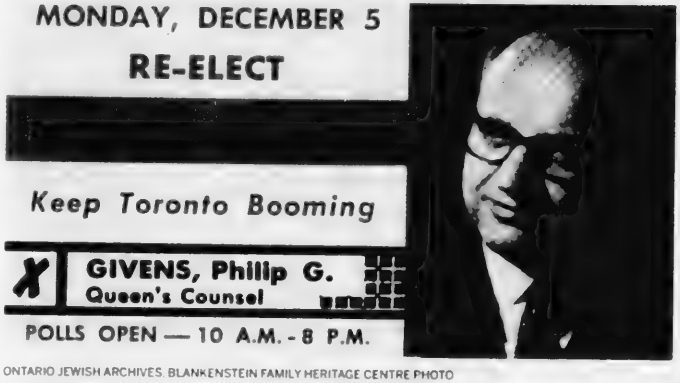
From the Archives | Nothing new about campaign signs



ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Seen is a "Re-elect Mayor Givens" promotion card from December 1966. Liberal Phil Givens was a longtime member of Toronto's city council who was appointed Toronto's acting mayor upon the sudden death of the incumbent, Donald Summerville, in 1963. He was elected mayor in the 1964 municipal election, but was defeated when he ran for re-election in 1966.

From the Archives | Two decades of peace

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

On Oct. 26, 1994, the Israel-Jordan peace treaty was signed between the two countries. Pictured in the Arava desert are, from left, Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. president Bill Clinton, King Hussein of Jordan, Israeli president Ezer Weizman and Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres.

From Yoni's Desk

Canada and Israel: Together yet apart

Last Wednesday, Oct. 22, Canadian Jews were reminded of the fragility of life, not once but twice.

Just before 10 a.m., Michael Zehaf-Bibeau fatally shot Cpl. Nathan Cirillo at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa. Next, Zehaf-Bibeau – a low-grade criminal with a troubled past, and a convert to Islam – opened fire inside the Centre Block of Parliament. He was shot dead by Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers before any more harm could be done.

Zehaf-Bibeau's rampage came two days after Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent died as a result of a targeted hit-and-run in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que. The perpetrator there, Martin Couture-Rouleau, harboured what the RCMP have referred to as "radical thoughts." He converted to Islam in 2013.

Meanwhile, at midnight Oct. 22 in Jerusalem, a funeral was held for Chaya Zissel Braun, the three-month-old killed when a Palestinian deliberately drove his car into a light-rail station. She had just visited the Western Wall for the first time in her young life. In the days since, Jerusalem has seen an alarming rise in violence, and record-high police presence. On Oct. 26, a second victim succumbed to her injuries.

The similarities between these tragedies, half a world apart, are impossible to ignore. Each of the perpetrators acted on his own. At the same time, all of them were linked to terrorist ideologies whose aim is to destroy the western way of life, whether in Canada, Israel or elsewhere. Finally, those who died were innocent victims in a global struggle against radical Islam.

In other ways, though, the events in Canada and Israel bear less resemblance to each other. In Canada, where attacks of this nature are thankfully rare, the natural response was shock, but that was followed closely by a pragmatic and healthy debate about how to avoid more of these kinds of assaults. By contrast, in Israel, where terror is tragically inevitable, the reaction was sadness and frustration. If some people weren't shocked by the killing of a baby, perhaps that's the worst part of the whole story.

In the days since the murders in Ottawa and St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, the conversation here has turned to security, and Canadians have been lauded around the world for our sober approach to the subject. The murders of Cpl. Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent are alarming, to be sure, but it's too early to call this a trend, let alone suggest our country is seriously imperilled. And while everyone wants to feel safe, many voices have cautioned that the level of safety we aim for should be proportionate to the threat.

But in Israel, the danger is constant – it has been all along. Each new act is a reminder of those that came before, and a harbinger of the ones to come – and even if Israelis are particularly adept at not being cowed by the enemy, the fear of terror is always present. In Israel, sober debate is essential, but so is decisive action.

In the aftermath of the Ottawa shooting, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced "his full support for Canada's fight against terrorism, in which Israel and the international community are partners." Canada and Israel fight together, no doubt, but they also fight apart. It's the same war, and yet it's different. ■ — YONI

Feature

Israeli project combines the Bible with rock 'n' roll

Sima Borkovski

The Bible is part of Jewish heritage, but it's definitely not part of the world of secular Israeli teenagers. A dynamic musical project is trying to change this reality by bringing together the biblical story and rock music.

"One has to know his past in order to get a better perspective on life. As an Israeli with a Jewish identity, I feel that the Bible belongs to me just as much as it belongs to Orthodox Jews," said David Aviv, the founder of Mekorock, a project that brings together Bible and rock music and is now in its sixth year.

"I wanted to make biblical texts accessible to young people, and in order to do that, I had to use the platform of rock music, which is much more attractive to them than the Bible."

The project started as a small initiative by Aviv, a local leader and founder of the Zait (Hebrew for olive) Jewish heritagae centre in the small community of Bat Hefer, located in Emek Hefer in the northern Sharon region. But following its great success, more and more cities throughout Israel became interested in the project. Currently, it operates in Kiryat Shmona, Holon, Modi'in, Be'er Sheva and Yerucham.

So what's Mekorock all about?

"It all started from my desire to get our youth interested in the Bible as part of our heritage, and since teenagers are not so keen on reading the Bible, I had to find something that will help them connect with these texts," he said.

"I wanted them to open this book and get acquainted with the ideas and stories presented there. In order for the project to work, it had to reach as many people as possible and be prestigious enough so youth bands would compete for the right to join it," Aviv added.

Mekorock participants in Bat Hefer. ZACH ELISHA PHOTO

"The teen musicians who joined the project had two sources of inspiration – the Bible and the artist that guided them through the writing process. Eventually they were taught how to read a biblical text and how to make it their own through the music they wrote. The first artist I chose was Ariel Horowitz who is also the son of the famous singer Naomi Shemer. I knew that he would be able to teach these young musicians to find ideas for songs in the texts," Aviv explains.

Horowitz was the first artist to join the project in 2010, but he was followed by leading musicians such as Alma Zohar, Barry Saharov and Dan Toren.

The project lasts for six months, during which the bands get to practise and record their songs in a professional recording studio. It culminates in a rock concert where all the bands play their song and the audience votes for the best performance.

The evening ends with a performance by a popular band or singer in order to bring masses of people to the event. This year's performer was, Shalom Hanoch, 68, who is sometimes called the "King of Israeli Rock."

Growing with the project

Shachar Erez and Oded Rabby are two young musicians in their final year of high school who started with the project when they were in Grade 8 and grew up with it as they developed their musical talent.

"I joined the project in its second year, and our theme was the Ten Commandments," recalls Erez, adding that she and Rabby were asked to write a song relating to the "You shall not murder" commandment.

"I didn't have a band at the time, but through the project, I met other musicians to play with and we formed a band. Eventually I was the one who wrote the song and we performed it. Though our song didn't win, I got hooked on this great project and joined it every year," she says.

"It provides a platform for us to work and develop ourselves as musicians. It's not only to write a song, but to use the Bible as our source of inspiration. In the beginning the Bible didn't appeal to me, but with time I learned to see the beauty of the texts and Alma Zohar, who was our guide, taught us how to use these texts as our sources. She inspired us and taught us how to write songs," Erez says with enthusiasm in her voice.

"I started this project as a young musician. I couldn't sing properly and didn't have a band. In the last Mekorock festival, our song won first prize. The project enables us to relate to the Bible differently while giving the texts our own interpretation."

Just like Erez, Rabby says he grew up with Mekorock.

"Three years ago, I had a band and someone told me about the project, so I decided to join. At first, I resented the idea of writing songs based on the Bible, because, being secular, I rejected the book and found it difficult to relate to. This past year, I had a good bond with our musical guide Dan Toren, who taught me methods I still use today when I write songs. Thanks to our mutual work, I made real progress as a musician during this year," he says.

"Toren encouraged us to take these biblical events and relate them to our own lives, so I took the story of the binding of Isaac, which I found very moving, and wrote about how we shouldn't take things for granted."

The project spreads its wings

Last year, Mekorock's organizers made a presentation to a conference of Jewish community centres in Budapest, Hungary. Some 50 representatives from 27 Jewish community centres around the world attended the conference to discuss ways they could co-operate.

"Many of the participants found the project appealing and eventually it will be implemented in four communities: Venezuela, Romania, Moldova and New Jersey," says Adi Nachson, who took part in the conference.

"The idea is to make this project universal and connect young musicians from Jewish communities throughout the world with their counterparts in Israel. In November, we plan to have a one-week seminar with workshops dedicated to Bible studies. This project can become an amazing platform to bring people together and connect Jewish communities all over the world." ■

Sima Borkovski is a freelance writer in Israel.

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Rabbis are not God: a lesson from the Freundel scandal

Brilliance, charisma and piety are wonderful, but only if grounded in humility and compassion

RABBI CHAIM STEINMETZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I've been in the rabbinate for 25 years, and I think it's high time we had a conversation about what a rabbi should be.

A scandal too far-fetched for a screenplay has come to light. A Washington, D.C., rabbi allegedly used a hidden camera to take videos of female conversion candidates undressing in the mikvah. Nothing could be more abhorrent: a spiritual leader in a spiritual place violating the most spiritual moment in a convert's life.

This scandal is shocking, yet commonplace. There are now so many rabbinic scandals exposed from rabbis of all stripes that there are special websites devoted to rabbinic scandals. This has shaken me to the core.

There was a time when I thought rabbis were special. Rabbis were supposed to be spiritual heroes, overcoming temptations others could not. Even in the worst moments, one could depend on rabbinic leadership. Elie Wiesel said that "in the [concentration] camps, there were kapos [who were]... former professors, industrialists, artists, merchants, workers, militants from the right and the left... but not one kapo had been a rabbi." Shouldn't years of careful spiritual training change us into giants?

Yes, rabbis *must* be special. We are role models, a living example of what a Torah life should be. The Talmud says one can learn profound lessons from a rabbi's idle chatter and from sitting at the dust of his feet. Rabbis are meant to be like "an angel of the Lord above," a man who is part prophet, part priest.

This image of the superhuman rabbi is one that remains dominant, even today. Chassidim have a theology of the tzaddik, a man born with an extraordinary soul. And even among non-chassidim, most biographies of great rabbis portray them as true angels. These are true hagiographies, meant to carefully preserve the rabbi's image while airbrushing out all faults. Great rabbis are meant to carry otherworldly wisdom and able to tell us God's will regarding electoral politics and real estate deals. When a book is written that speaks honestly about the imperfections of great rabbis, such as the *The Making of a Godol*, a controversy erupts. We want our rabbis to be perfect, to preach wisely, practise piety and produce miracles.

> *When you expect perfection from imperfect people, something will go wrong.*

But sadly, that's not what happens in real life. There are rabbis who are cruel to vulnerable converts, and rabbis who are weak, materialistic, hypocritical and dishonest. Perhaps Wiesel is right that rabbis rarely became kapos, but read the newspapers and you'll see there are many other vices rabbis have fallen into. And even those rabbis who are good people are imperfect. But we refuse to accept this, and demand perfect role models. This desire is a universal phenomenon, one that extends well beyond the Jewish world. Even Abraham Lincoln subscribed to this view: "Let us believe... that [George] Washington was spotless...it makes human nature better to believe that one human being was perfect." But when you expect perfection from imperfect people, something will go wrong.

To keep up with the demands of perfection, some rabbis become "religious politicians" who use their charm and wit to maintain popularity while losing sight of their ideals. Others, intoxicated with the power of the rabbinate, drink the Kool-Aid and imagine themselves to be God's gift to humanity. Both forget who they are, their identity distorted by the funhouse mirror of religious authority.

Sadly, congregants drink the Kool-Aid as often as the rabbis. Pick up some of the popular rabbinic biographies, and you'll even see faults being spun as virtues. One rabbi's lack of involvement with his family is seen as the virtue of devotion to Torah study. Another rabbi's short temper is considered to be a desire for high standards. A rebbetzin's rejection of vaccinations and interest in homeopathic remedies is seen as wise rather than dangerous. And of course, if a rabbi is otherwise respected, his request for "practice dunks" is seen as meticulousness, rather than something bizarre and disturbing.

Rabbi Barry Freundel

Rabbis are not God. Too often, rabbis and congregants confuse being a role model with being an angel. This attitude is incredibly unhealthy and gives license to corruption and superstition.

Actually, one thing I've learned in 25 years in the rabbinate is that I make mistakes – lots of them. There was the time early in my career when I was all set to give a rip-roaring speech one Shabbat about the beauty of marriage and had a painful fight with my wife the Friday night before. I learned that preaching is precarious and that it's uncomfortable to talk about greatness while you are still mediocre yourself. I imagine virtually every rabbi, on their own level, struggles with similar issues.

But imperfection doesn't stop someone from being a role model. On the contrary, it makes them easier to relate to. Jacob's wrestling and Judah's repentance make them two of the Bible's most significant heroes. Akiva and Reish Lakish become the Talmud's greatest rabbis, despite their shady backgrounds. The struggling man of repentance who overcomes his frailties is the one who achieves the highest level of human greatness.

The rabbis who have inspired me most are the ones who were willing to admit mistakes and humbly embraced everyone, no matter who they were. These rabbis greeted everyone warmly, including the neighbourhood nuns, and made sure the children from the poorest families were treated with the same respect as everyone else. They were "angels" not because they were perfect, but because they were sincerely devoted to God's work.

In the wake of this awful scandal, we should reconsider what we want in a rabbi. Yes, brilliance, charisma and piety are wonderful, but only if grounded first in humility and compassion. Before looking for a spiritual leader who's an angel, let's just find one who is a mensch. ■

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Under lockdown in Centre Block

Michelle Gordon

Having been a CIJA parliamentary intern in Ottawa only since September, everything that happens on Parliament Hill still strikes me as a novel and interesting experience. But what happened here on Oct. 22, when terrorism came to the Centre Block, will always stay with me.

I arrived at my office in the Confederation Building that morning, expecting a typically busy day as the Commons was scheduled to be sitting. I was going to have to brief my MP, Liberal Scott Brison, for an evening session of the Finance Committee, where the Governor of the Bank of Canada was scheduled to speak.

The committee meets regularly in one of the caucus rooms off the Hall of Honour. It has been routine for me to show my badge and enter the Centre Block for the committee's meetings. I would have done so that evening.

Shortly before 10:00 a.m., however, a colleague told me, "There's been a shooting on Parliament Hill, and we have to go into lockdown." We were the only people in our office at the time. I was taken aback, and asked her if a lockdown was a common occurrence. She said no, it was the first time in her more than 10 years on the Hill.

Lockdown meant locking the doors, shutting off the lights, closing the windows and not leaving the office. At the time, I had no idea that this would be our situation for the next eight hours. I called my parents in Toronto to reassure them I was alright. I received a barrage of text messages from my friends asking how I was.

It didn't occur to me at first that this was a terrorist attack on Parliament Hill. I thought it might be an isolated shooting on Wellington Street opposite the Hill. I immediately went online and read about what had happened. I was scared. I was also frustrated to be so close to a major event but have so little direct awareness of what was unfolding.

There was a sense of relief when Brison, who was about to attend a Liberal caucus meeting in the Centre Block, phoned our office to inquire about our well-being and to inform us that he was safe but also under lockdown.

But I felt deeply saddened when we received an email that Cpl. Nathan Cirillo had died of his injuries.

I had driven past the monument on Sunday and seen guards on duty, possibly him among them, so it added extra poignancy to the news of his death.

At this point, the police were leaving open the possibility that more than one gunman was involved in the attack, and so even though I was in the Confederation Building, rather than in the Parliament Buildings per se, there was a continuous feeling of vulnerability.

I followed the coverage on CBC and the minute-by-minute updates on Twitter, although the tweets were almost all inaccurate. They reported a shooting in front of the Chateau Laurier Hotel and at the Rideau Centre. It conveyed the impression of a co-ordinated attack with more than one assailant.

I had brought my lunch with me, so as the lockdown continued beyond the noon hour, I did not go hungry. By 1:30 p.m., I felt safe enough to leave the office for a trip to the washroom. But the lockdown persisted into the evening hours.

Finally, at 8:05 p.m., a security guard knocked on the office door and told us we could leave the building.

Terrorism had come to Parliament Hill, and I was uncertain whether the Commons would sit the next day or whether we would be expected to show up for work. When I awoke the next morning, I checked my email and learned that MPs and their staffs would carry on with their duties. The heart of Canada's democracy would continue beating strongly. ■

Michelle Gordon is a CIJA intern in the office of MP Scott Brison in Ottawa.

QuAIA once again ignites old hatreds

Bernie Farber

Jewish-themed issues were unexpectedly part of the Toronto municipal elections. We heard allegations of former mayor Rob Ford uttering anti-Semitic calumnies. And after he dropped out of the race, a fringe Jewish candidate, Ari Goldkind, demanded that his brother Doug apologize for Rob's transgressions since he was now running in his brother's stead. That led to Doug Ford trying to defend the family honour by invoking the fact he had a Jewish doctor, dentist, lawyer etc. In turn, in order to shield himself against accusations of anti-Semitism, Doug invoked his evangelical Christian wife's Jewish bloodline as a means of defence.

However, for me, the ugliest of Jewish themes was the re-emergence of that distasteful group of anti-Israel agitators Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) from what I thought was a dormant sleep. Unfortunately, hatred has this tendency to feed off publicity, and one of the mayoral debates gave it an unnecessary breath of life.

QuAIA gained notoriety a number of years ago when it raised a ruckus in the Jewish community with its decision to march in Toronto's gay Pride parade. I admit today with some regret that, as CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress at the time, I was a part of the Jewish community leadership that helped raise its profile. Undeniably, Israel has its faults, but it's a haven for LGBTQ people in an otherwise hostile and unwelcoming Middle East. However by railing against QuAIA's use of the word "apartheid" in its name, we gave it all the exposure it craved.

"It's hateful," we protested. "Israel is a haven for gays and lesbians," we reminded many. We engaged in long, drawn-out verbal battles explaining how Israel is not an apartheid state. In the end, an investigation into the use of the word "apartheid" by the City of Toronto determined that while distasteful, argumentative, and even vile and repulsive, it doesn't contravene city funding regulations. More than that, despite our protestations, it was clear that the use of the term with all its untruthful implications as applied to Israel was not in violation of Canada's anti-hate laws.

The Jewish community and its many supporters were stymied. However, some thoughtful heads came together and decided on a strategy. Instead of feeding the beast, we would stand up for Israel. Instead of drawing attention to the QuAIA's revolting rhetoric, we would celebrate the Jewish state, which warmly accepts LGBTQ people and gives them legal protections unseen anywhere else in the Middle East.

Thus was born the collaboration with the Jewish LGBTQ group Kulanu. The word went out far and wide for Jews, non-Jews and anyone who supported Israel's protection of gays and lesbians to join us at the Pride parade.

Surprisingly, hundreds turned up, dancing, singing distributing condoms whose packaging read "Israel still a safe place to come" captured the hearts of thousands along the parade route.

The few QuAIA supporters who did show up were obvious by their negative messaging and dour outlook. Their balloon began to lose air very quickly. QuAIA soon became irrelevant, as Pride-goers were more interested in partying and celebrating than in hearing odious messages of hate. Optimism won out over pessimism.

The bottom line is simple, and it's time for those who support Israel to get it: QuAIA has a democratic right to its opinion, no matter how wrong it may be. Those of us who disagree with QuAIA do Israel a disservice by trying to engage with them in a negative campaign. If QuAIA breaks our anti-hate laws, I expect police to lay charges.

If ever the QuAIA issue arises again, we must shine the light on Israel's LGBTQ record, reminding the world that gays, lesbians, queers and transgendered people live in a state of oppression in virtually all Islamic countries.

Our message should be in celebration of Israel as a true democracy that works to respect the rights of all. ■

We need more Jews

Rabbi Dow Marmur

There can be no Judaism without Jews. In view of low birthrates, high incidence of intermarriage and, of late, the "new" anti-Semitism, Jewish communities outside Israel may be in danger, if not of extinction then of being reduced to ultra-Orthodox enclaves, a Jewish version of the Amish.

If we don't panic, it's because more than six million Jews now live in Israel. Though religious extremists are gaining ground there, as elsewhere in the world, the majority still reflects a wide range of Jewish perceptions and practices.

But can we really envision Judaism only as the official religion of one state, however essential it is to our Jewish existence, and the risk of a Jewish version of the Taliban becoming dominant there?

Those who affirm that a vibrant Diaspora must remain an integral part of normative Judaism have good reason to encourage conversion. Primary targets may be women and men who have Jewish ancestry. In their search for roots and family memories, some may wish to embrace the faith their parents or grandparents abandoned.

That may have been, at least in part, behind the decision some 30 years ago of the American Reform movement to accept as Jews those who've one Jewish parent, whether father or mother, thus challenging traditional Jewish law that only recognizes Jewish descent on the mother's side.

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow followed the traditional path. Not unexpectedly, her recent conversion attracted much media attention. Though she's the daughter of a Jewish father, who is said to come from a long line of rabbis, and a non-Jewish mother, she chose to undergo a traditional conversion.

That's also the approach of Shavei Israel (Returners to Israel). Its founder, Michael Freund, reflects the aim of the organization when he writes that although Paltrow needed halachic confirmation of her status, she has "a historical, biological and even spiritual connection with the Jewish People."

Freund is proud of the achievements of Shavei Israel in its "reaching out to lost tribes and far-flung communities of Jewish descent, seeking to strengthen their connection with Israel and the Jewish People." It's a kind of Birthright project for all ages.

His critics, however, are understandably uncomfortable with references to biology and alarmed by his alliance with the Israeli chief rabbinate, known for its reactionary stance on matters of Jewish status.

But Shavei Israel has brought back to Judaism thousands of men, women and children from far-flung places and helped many of them to be integrated in Israel. Yet in the long run, something more drastic is needed. Attracting people with Jewish ancestry, of whom there may be millions worldwide, is a beginning, but there are likely to be many more who'd find in Judaism what they're looking for in life, not because of biology, but because of theology.

To meet their individual spiritual needs and, at the same time, the collective needs of the Jewish people should be on the agenda of Diaspora Jewry. Not only do we live among non-Jews in search of the sacred, but here we're free from the draconian strictures of the Israeli rabbinic establishment.

If the liberal movements in Judaism – Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal, Conservative, modern Orthodox and perhaps others – would combine their resources, potential converts would find it much easier to be integrated into the Jewish community. But even if each group has to go it alone, they can do much more to make Judaism attractive to potential converts by helping them to find a spiritual home and at the same time contribute to the survival of the Jewish People.

Of course, there are obstacles. Those of us who've helped non-Jews married to Jews to embrace Judaism know that the main stumbling block is often the ambivalence of the Jewish partners and the hostility of their families.

As a start, therefore, we owe it to ourselves to open up the debate. The spiritual well-being of individuals and the demographic future of our people are at stake. ■

The troubling truth about Turkey

Sheryl Saperia

Those who downplay the danger posed by terrorism often fall back on the argument that the terrorist designation is nothing more than a political instrument to attack one's opponents or dissenters, and is therefore entirely subjective.

Saudi Arabia has just bolstered this claim. Human Rights Watch recently reported that the kingdom has classified atheists as terrorists, alongside truly dangerous groups such as the Islamic State.

This is a stark example of how autocratic governments often abuse the terrorist label. But democracies must hold themselves to a higher standard: they must objectively and consistently designate terrorist individuals, groups, and states based on fair meanings of those terms.

Canada has sound definitions of what it means for an individual or group to commit terrorism and for a foreign government to sponsor it. But Ottawa's list of terror-sponsoring states currently stands at two. While Iran and Syria unequivocally deserve their places on that list, there are other countries that meet the legislative criteria for censure as sponsors of terror.

My last column urged Ottawa to reconsider its relationship with Qatar, given its sponsorship of Hamas and other troubling conduct.

The same can be said of Turkey, another ostensible western ally. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has failed to contribute to the security of Europe and North America, as NATO membership dictates. On the contrary, Turkey provides financial support to terrorist entities such as Hamas; has helped Iran evade international sanctions; and has deliberately allowed a porous border into Syria – facilitating the flow of fighters, weapons and money to the Islamic State and other violent groups.

Turkey's sponsorship of Hamas is striking. Erdogan's Ministry of Finance reportedly set aside $300 million for the Hamas government in Gaza in December 2011. Turkey is also the home base for Saleh al-Arouri, the founder of Hamas' armed wing. He's believed to be involved in raising money for Hamas, and directing the group's terrorist operations in the West Bank. Al-Arouri is not living clandestinely in Turkey. In March 2012, he took part in a Hamas delegation that met with high-ranking Turkish government officials to discuss developments in Palestinian politics, and in October 2012, he travelled from Turkey to Gaza to be present for the arrival of Qatar's emir.

Mahmoud Attoun and Taysir Suleiman are other Hamas figures believed to be living in Turkey. Both were tried in court, found guilty of murder and given life sentences in Israel, but were freed following a prisoner exchange deal to secure the release of kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Schalit. They now speak publicly in Turkey and elsewhere, extolling Hamas' virtues.

The Erdogan government's close associations with the IHH further reveal its support for Hamas. The IHH (Insani Yardim Vakfi) is a member of the Union of Good, an umbrella group of more than 50 Islamic funds and foundations that was banned by the U.S. Treasury in 2008 for transferring funds to Hamas. Treasury noted that "some of the funds transferred by the Union of Good have compensated Hamas terrorists by providing payments to the families of suicide bombers." Canada should investigate the IHH not only in the context of Turkey's terror sponsorship, but as potentially worthy in itself of a terrorist designation.

If Canada is reluctant to name Turkey as a state sponsor of terror in the near term, incremental steps could be taken to pressure Erdogan to behave as a true NATO ally. For example, terrorist entities based in Turkey might be designated first. Next would be the listing of Turkish terror sponsors – be they individuals, front companies or charities. Only if these measures fail to influence Ankara would the more drastic step be taken of designating Turkey as a state sponsor of terror.

One way or another, Canada must prove itself to be a fair arbiter of who qualifies as a terror sponsor, and take a strong stand against Turkey's alarming behaviour. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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Cover Story

Local mikvahs reassure patrons after D.C. arrest

LILA SARICK
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A Vancouver mikvah will be swept by a security expert for hidden electronic equipment to assuage women's concerns after a U.S. rabbi was recently charged with voyeurism.

Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt, leader of Vancouver's Schara Tzedek Congregation, says it is unfortunate, but necessary that the community needs to take this step.

"It's very sad. The mikvah for centuries has been built on a certain amount of trust," said Rabbi Rosenblatt. "My fears are that it will create a lot of anxiety."

Earlier this month, Rabbi Barry Freundel, an Orthodox rabbi in Washington D.C., was arrested after he allegedly used a hidden camera to spy on women in the mikvah. He has pleaded not guilty to six charges of voyeurism.

While no other mikvahs in Canada are known to be going to the same lengths as the one in Vancouver, the arrest in Washington has caused them to reflect on their procedures and to reassure their users.

In a letter sent to his synagogue's membership, Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, senior rabbi at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation, which has a mikvah in its building, emphasized that "there are not, nor have there have ever been, any cameras or surveillance equipment inside the mikvah."

In an interview, Rabbi Korobkin said the mikvah has to walk a fine line between being accessible to patrons while maintaining privacy.

The mikvah already has many safeguards in place, chief of which is "we are dealing with people of integrity."

As well, "no one has a monopoly on governance of the mikvah. No one person can feel at liberty to go into the mikvah to do whatever they want," he said.

At both the Toronto and Montreal community mikvahs, the women who run the buildings insist they are in firm control of the institutions.

"If something went in, I would know. Everything here has to go through me," said Kayla Richter, mikvah co-ordinator for the Toronto Mikvah on Sheppard Avenue.

Chani Mockin, who "takes care" of Mikveh Israel on Kildare Road in Montreal, concurs. "Just a few people have keys. We're very careful." The Washington situation "will definitely make women more aware, more alert... but it's not going to stop women from going to the mikvah."

The arrest of Rabbi Freundel also raises serious questions about the potential for rabbinic abuses of power, especially during the conversion process, when candidates are especially vulnerable. Allegations about the rabbi's inappropriate dealings with converts have emerged as rabbinic authorities investigate the case.

Last week, the Rabbinic Council of America, the U.S. association for modern Orthodox rabbis, announced that a female ombudsman will be assigned to every beit din (rabbinical court) to receive concerns from female candidates in the conversion process. The RCA is also appointing a commission to review the current conversion process and suggest safeguards against possible abuses.

The mikvah at Chabad @ Flamingo

Toronto's beit din will discuss some of the issues raised by the RCA, but is unlikely to make any significant changes, said Rabbi Asher Vale, director of the beit din of the Orthodox Va'ad Harabonim of Toronto.

"This is something that came from left field. It's not the procedures, it's the person," Rabbi Vale said. "Our beit din has a process that is fair, compassionate and sensitive to people, and at the same time tries to uphold standards."

Rabbi Korobkin agrees that the Freundel situation is an aberration. "It's a gross violation of rabbinic privilege," he said. "Such a sociopathic violation of human decency. I don't think we could have seen it coming from the rabbinate."

While he said there is no reason to doubt the integrity of the rabbis involved with conversions in the city, it would be wise to look at the RCA's recommendations. "They're going about in a very responsible, methodical way. We will see if we can apply it to the local beit din."

The Conservative and Reform movements are also watching the fallout from the Freundel case, but Rabbi Michal Shekel, rabbinic director of Toronto's Reform beit din, says changes are unlikely to be made in its process.

The Washington allegations arose from a situation where one individual had total control of the conversion process, she said.

In Toronto, the year-long conversion course is taught by a number of rabbis, and while individuals need a sponsoring rabbi, they can change rabbis if they are uncomfortable.

The mikvah used for Reform, and some Conservative, conversions is run by a committee of laypeople, she said. "I don't control the mikvah."

But the allegations in Washington certainly has made it more difficult for rabbis promoting the idea of mikvah, she said.

Immersing in the mikvah "is such a powerful, meaningful, spiritual experience," Rabbi Shekel said. "That people feel they have to look over their shoulder should be beyond their imagination." ■

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It's time for the rabbinical establishment to show leadership

RAHEL BAYAR
MEIRA BAYAR ELLIAS

On Oct. 14, Rabbi Barry Freundel of Congregation Kesher Israel in Washington D.C., was arrested on charges of voyeurism. He stands accused of placing hidden video cameras in the shul's mikvah. In an address to the congregation, Elanit Jakabovics, the shul's president, said, "The truth is, we don't know the extent, we don't fully know what happened."

A few months ago, we wrote in these pages about the case of Evan Zauder, a teacher at a Jewish day school in New Jersey who earlier this year pleaded guilty to child pornography charges and enticement of a minor in January 2013. In particular, we called out Jewish community leaders who wrote letters on his behalf asking a judge for a lenient sentence. We argued that in asking for leniency for the perpetrator, these letter-writers were effectively ignoring the trauma of the victims. Ultimately, our essay concluded, it is up to all of us to hold our leaders accountable to create a safe environment for our vulnerable neighbours.

Rabbi Freundel was a leader in his community. He was not only a rabbi, but a friend, mentor, and teacher to many. Many have noted in the days since his arrest that the rabbi was beloved and thought highly of, within and outside Washington.

And yet, when faced with allegations that he committed a heinous crime (Rabbi Freundel has pleaded not guilty), Jewish community leaders did not hesitate. Indeed, they acted with haste. They did not weigh the pros and cons of reporting him, nor did they spend precious time debating the potential consequences of a false allegation. In similar circumstances others could have denied it, passed along information to a beit din, made excuses, or warned the rabbi that this information had come to light. In some past incidents of impropriety, this is precisely what has occurred.

Instead, Kesher Israel alerted the proper authorities. This was the right move.

Kesher Israel's leaders chose to put the victims first. For this they are to be lauded. They have shown great compassion and a deep understanding of how our community should act in these sorts of unfortunate incidents. As a child, one of us was sexually assaulted by a fellow classmate during a terrifying sleepover. Many years later, we were forced to confront that episode when we discovered the attacker was employed as an attendant at a community mikvah on the east coast of the United States. The memory of that night, coupled with the power a mikvah attendant holds over vulnerable, naked women, was enough for us to make a call.

Unfortunately, we then learned first-hand how unprepared many Orthodox rabbis are when it comes to handling this kind of situation. Granted, we were presenting a legally ambiguous situation – there was no police report, the statute of limitations had long expired and we were both children at the time – but after describing that horrifically long night, it became clear that the rabbi of the congregation was hesitant to make a decision and accept the moral responsibility we expect from religious role models in these situations.

Religious leaders – be they rabbis, teachers, camp counsellors or mikvah attendants – are in positions of power. With that comes a moral responsibility. If one portrays – or has – a history of abusive tendencies, moral ambiguity, or destructive and manipulative behaviour, should they be allowed to remain in those positions? Should a rabbinical association be allowed to withhold information from a community? There are reports the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) did just that when allegations of impropriety surrounding Rabbi Freundel first surfaced in 2012.

Was Rabbi Freundel's reputation more important than the women he allegedly mistreated? Was the inevitable embarrassment of his practices more important that the number of people for whom the mikvah experience has now been forever tainted?

There is no guidebook for morality, no lecture specific enough to cover every type of abuse that may arise. Our community leaders will consistently be faced with cases of abuse – both ambiguous and obvious. And that begs the question: Will our communal and rabbinic leadership rise to the occasion and learn from their mistakes?

Kesher Israel has shown us what true leadership is. The jury is still out as to whether the RCA will follow suit. ■

Rahel Bayar, is a child abuse and sex crimes prosecutor who has lectured extensively on preventing abuse within the Jewish community. Meira Bayar Ellias is a licensed independent clinical social worker who has worked extensively with victims of trauma.

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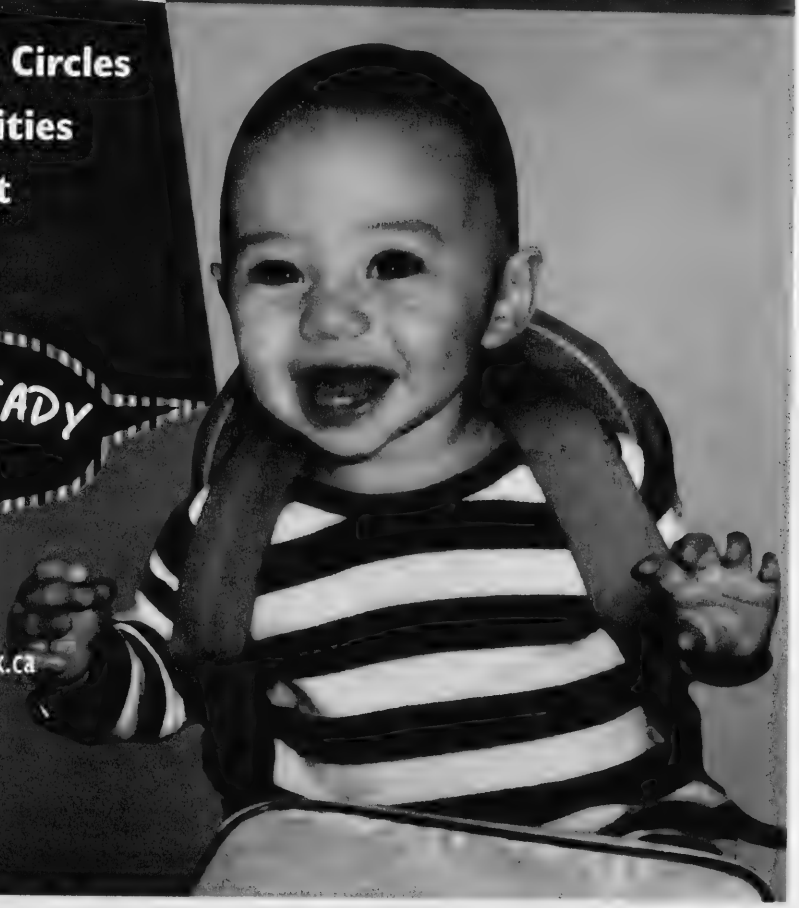

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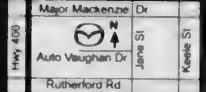
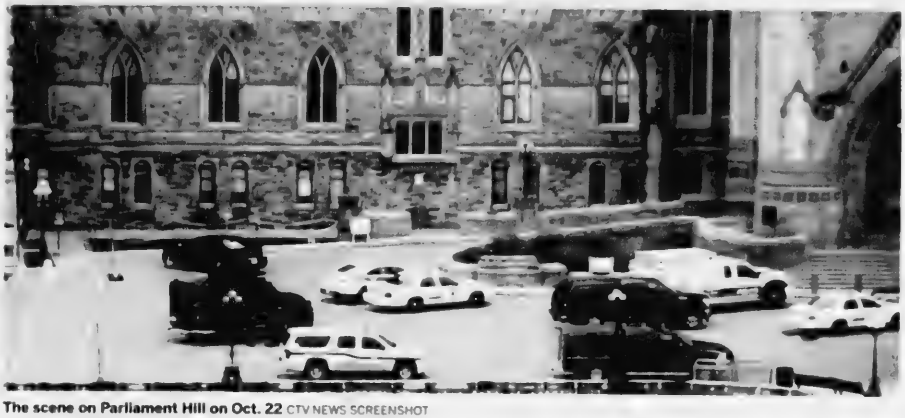


Attacks jolt Jewish communities



The scene on Parliament Hill on Oct. 22 CTV NEWS SCREENSHOT

JANICE ARNOLD
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Although the Oct. 22 shooting on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and the hit-and-run in Quebec a couple days earlier were not attacks against Jews, the community is taking extra precautions.

When phoned by *The CJN*, shortly after the Ottawa shooting, Martin Sampson, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) communications director, was in lockdown inside the organization's head office in downtown Ottawa.

At the time, around noon, the alleged gunman, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, 32, who fatally shot Cpl. Nathan Cirillo outside the National War Memorial, had been killed by the sergeant-at-arms inside Parliament's Centre Block, where he had fled and went on a shooting rampage.

The attack came just two days after Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was killed in an apparently targeted hit and run in St. Jean-sur-Richelieu.

"I can see five members of the SWAT team moving down Queen Street," Sampson said.

"At this time we are waiting for all the facts. The situation is fluid and evolving rapidly," he added.

Sampson said CIJA does not know if the two attempts on members of the Canadian military are related.

"We are very concerned about the rise of extremism and continue to monitor this very closely, and see what the implications are for our community."

A 22-year-old CIJA intern, Daniel Gans, said he was in the Parliament building when the shooter stormed Centre Block.

"The shooting happened 20 minutes after I usually walk by [the war memorial]. He went through the same doors that I go through, so it was a scary thought to think that had I been 20 minutes late to work, I would have been right there when it happened," Gans said.

"There was the first initial shot, but your first thought is never that there is a shooting. Once there was a rapid burst of gunfire and seeing the guard on our floor running down the hallway, you knew it was real."

He said he and his colleagues were advised to lock the door to their office and turn off the lights. He said they weren't permitted to leave the building until 9:30 p.m.

B'nai Brith Canada urged the government, police and security officials to step up their efforts to contain "homegrown radicalization," which it calls a "very real and very dangerous threat."

"The attacks this week have demonstrated that Canada is no longer immune to the danger of individuals harbouring and propagating radical ideologies," said CEO Michael Mostyn.

The attacks were also condemned by the Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, which similarly expressed concern about "homegrown terror."

"I hope this incident helps Canadians realize the depth of the very real threat posed to all citizens, and that both government officials and private individuals are shaken out of their complacency, and proper measures are taken to ensure no more Canadians lose their lives to terror," said president and CEO Avi Benlolo.

Cantor Daniel Benlolo (no relation) of Ottawa's Congregation Beth Shalom, which is a 10-minute walk from Parliament Hill, said the synagogue decided to close and all staff left around 1:30 p.m. He said the next day, the synagogue had reopened and everyone was back, but remain on "heightened alert."

Located at Chapel and Rideau Streets, the synagogue was outside the lockdown perimeter set up by police, he said.

Benlolo said he was not immediately aware of what was happening until he started getting calls from congregants and relatives. Although no direct threat to Jews was known, he said he followed instructions from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, which was in contact with police, to take such precautions as locking doors and staying away from windows.

In the aftermath, he said the congregation, which has about 400 member families and serves many out-of-town visitors, is concerned about what security it should be taking, especially for a concert planned for Canadian Magen David Adom on Oct. 27. "We will have to have extra security. It's a very delicate situation."

Benlolo is active in interfaith dialogue and has good personal relations with imams and other Muslims, some of whom called to ask whether everything was all right at the synagogue.

"I never imagined anything like this would happen here," he said. "It makes you think how easy it is to create such a calamity. It's very scary."

At the same time, he cautioned, "We can't generalize about [Muslims], it's not right. There are lone wolves."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

Russian Jews gather for first Limmud FSU

JODIE SHUPCA
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Alex and Rachel Zveiris. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

Jews from the former Soviet Union are different from the "mainstream" Jewish community in Canada. That was the sentiment expressed repeatedly this past weekend, including from those who weren't themselves born in the FSU but still identify as "Russian Jews."

Some 400 self-identified FSU Jews, predominantly Toronto-based, gathered at the Canadiana-adorned Deerhurst Resort several hours north of the city for Canada's inaugural Limmud FSU conference.

The volunteer-driven conference was designed to awaken enthusiasm for Jewish life and learning among young Russian-speaking adults, both currently living in and originally from the FSU. The target demographic was 20 to 40, but people across the age spectrum attended.

Limmud FSU was founded in 2006 and has since been held annually in places such as Russia, Ukraine, Israel and the United States. The weekend consisted of speaker sessions, hands-on workshops, Shabbat rituals and meals, fitness classes and musical performances. Speakers addressed a range of subjects, from geopolitics and the Holocaust to literature, entrepreneurship and sexuality.

Highlights included "Global Anti-Semitism and International Terrorism," presented by Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler; "Do they have Power? The Russian-speaking Jewish Elite in Russia," presented by Olena Bagno, a researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel and a post-doctoral student at the University of Toronto's Centre for Jewish Studies; and "Kosher Lust: Love is Not the Answer," presented by U.S. author and TV host Rabbi Shmuley Boteach.

Numerous participants amassed in the halls between talks, speaking an animated jumble of Russian, Hebrew and English about why they had come to the conference, the value they saw in gathering as a distinct group, and their overall sense of identity and difference.

Though their opinions varied somewhat, a common thread was a feeling of cultural separateness from the rest of the Toronto Jewish community, as well as a deep sense of pride in their heritage and a desire to preserve their language and traditions.

Alex Zveiris, 29, and his wife, Rachel, 26, were volunteer members of the conference's organizing committee and attended the event with their eight-month-old baby.

"We want to emphasize the Jewish *and* the Russian parts of our identities. Both of our parents are from Russia," said Zveiris, who was born in Ukraine and lived in Israel from age five to 19. "UJA [the United Jewish Appeal] has a lot of programs catered to the overall Jewish community in Toronto, which is great, but Russian Jews are, for some things, culturally different… I know when my son grows up I want him to speak Russian, to know about his background and not to lose his identity."

When asked if he could pinpoint the difference between FSU- and Canadian-born Jews, he said: "For Canadian Jews, everything is set for them already. Me being an immigrant, things have been more difficult, so I appreciate things more… also, we have a very family-based culture and are not planning every little thing so much. We're just living day-by-day… we're more spontaneous, adventurous."

Ilya, 27, who chose to withhold his last name, was born in Russia and moved with his family to Montreal in 1989. Several years ago, he moved to Toronto on his own. He said Limmud appealed to him because of the collection of speakers, but also because it was "a good opportunity to meet fellow Russian Jews who live in Toronto."

He attributed many of the cultural divisions between FSU Jews and the rest of Toronto's Jewish community to the struggles faced by adult immigrants in the major immigration waves of the '80s and '90s, though he believes integration is increasing with younger generations.

"Those who came [as adults] had to retrain professionally, seek equivalencies and integrate into the market, versus the Jewish community that had been in [Canada] for much longer and already had all sorts of professions," he said. "There are very few doctors, lawyers or other highly-regulated professionals among the adult FSU immigrants who came, but now their children are doing that, creating fewer differences."

While FSU Jews are known for being largely non-religious, Irina Petrini, who left Russia in 1975 and now lives in Toronto,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 30, 2014

Gift funds Mount Sinai's expanded maternal-fetal centre

JODIE SHUPAC
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Midway through the fourth year of its eight-year Campaign to Renew Sinai, Mount Sinai Hospital has announced a major donation from Toronto philanthropists Frances and Lawrence Bloomberg.

"We're not disclosing the amount at [the couple's] request," said Mount Sinai Foundation president Kevin Goldthorp, "but obviously it's a very generous gift... The Bloombergs' lifetime support for the hospital has now surpassed the $10-million mark."

The gift will go toward expanding the hospital's Frances Bloomberg Centre for maternal-fetal care to include a new neo-natal intensive care unit, a new labour and delivery unit and equipment upgrades.

The new facilities will be opened in February, and the equipment, which includes a new generation of ventilators and monitors, will be installed over the next several years.

The Frances Bloomberg Centre, established at Mount Sinai about 10 years ago, is a comprehensive division that deals with a wide range of issues related to women's and infants' health, including obstetrics and high-risk pregnancies, fertility and post-menopausal complications.

Lawrence Bloomberg, left, with Joseph Mapa, president and CEO of Mount Sinai Hospital, at an event earlier this month celebrating the hospital's new mother and infant care units.

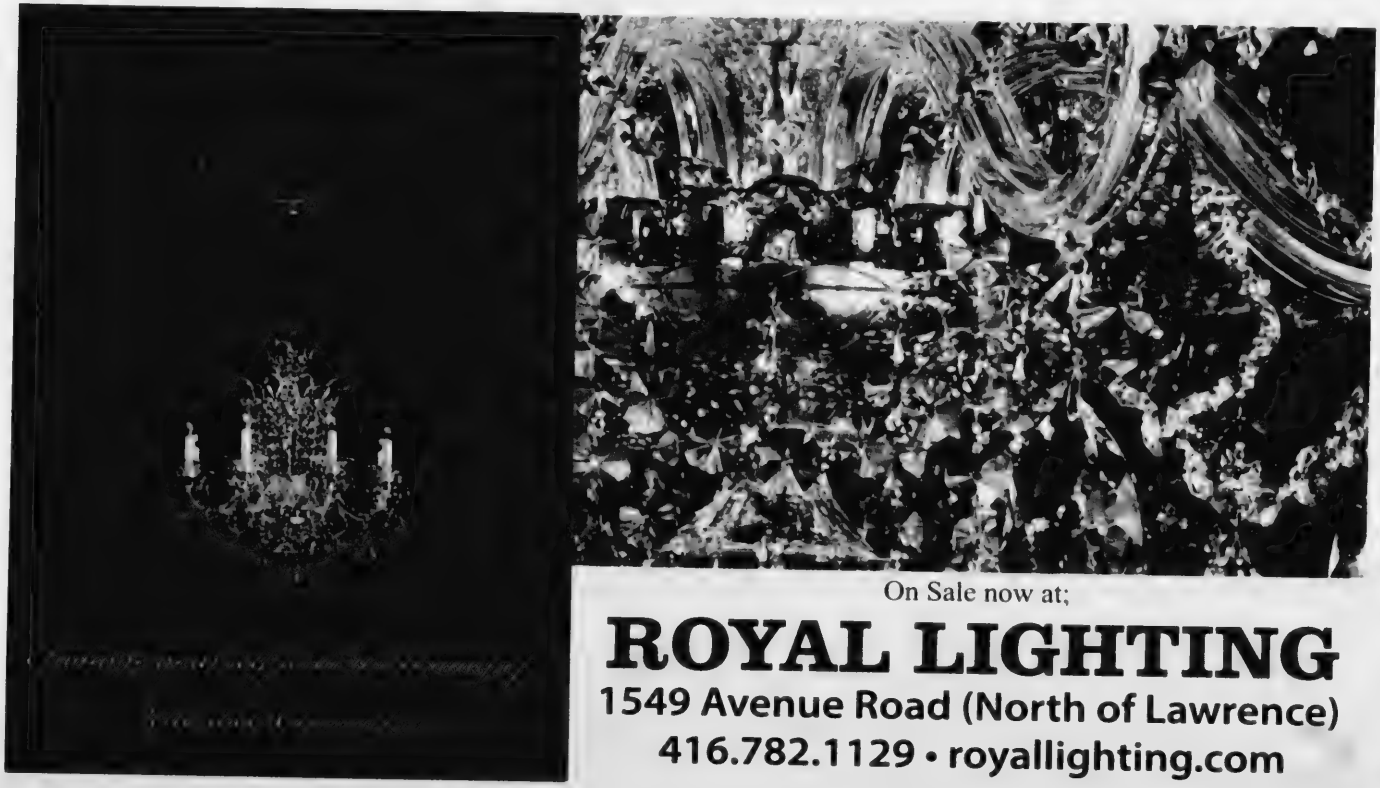
The centre's neo-natal work at the clinical and research levels has made the hospital an international trailblazer, as well as a common referral site outside of Toronto.

"[Mount Sinai] is distinctive in our comprehensive care of mother and baby together," Goldthorp said. "Having [and treating] mother and baby in the same centre and the same hospital is quite unique... Our neo-natal research is changing how premature babies are born and cared for worldwide."

He added that Mount Sinai is one of only three hospitals in North America that operate on infants in utero, and that cases of complex pregnancies or births are often sent to them.

"Fran and I have always thought that it was important to support Mount Sinai Hospital," Lawrence Bloomberg said. "We chose to provide additional funding to this area to recognize its importance to Mount Sinai, the exemplary care it provides, its scientific excellence, and because we saw how our support would improve lives for generations to come."

About 7,000 babies are born at Mount Sinai each year, and about two-thirds of these are considered high-risk, with issues including advanced maternal age or illnesses that the mother has, such as diabetes or cancer, that put the baby in danger. ■



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1,800 attend closing event for the Shabbat Project

SHERI SHEFA
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Singer Gad Elbaz, left, was joined at the Havdalah Unity Concert by members of the Oziel choir, Ariel Oziel, Isaac Oziel, Elie Oziel and Isaac Osiel. SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

For the closing of the immensely successful Shabbat Project, held for the first time on an international scale, hundreds of Torontonians gathered for a havdalah concert featuring Israeli musician Gad Elbaz.

The initiative, held Oct. 24-25, brought Jews from across the religious spectrum together to keep a full Shabbat and take part in various related programs in more than 461 cities and 65 countries, said Sarah Zeldman, the Shabbat Project's social media co-ordinator.

"This started in South Africa last year," Zeldman said. "There was a conference of Jewish leaders in South Africa and the chief rabbi of South Africa stood up and said, 'I'm starting an initiative that all the Jews of South Africa will keep one complete Shabbat on a certain date.' The reaction was, 'Nice idea, but it's not going to happen.'"

But to the surprise of many, the idea quickly caught on and spread, she said.

"In the end, over 70 per cent of South African Jews kept one complete Shabbat together, and what really got people was the outpouring of videos and people saying how much they loved it and appreciated it. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that it caught international attention, and Jewish communities around the world started saying, 'How do we bring this to our city?'"

In the following months, volunteers from hundreds of cities around the world have been working to promote the cause and organize events around the Shabbat Project.

In Toronto on Oct. 23, more than 2,300 women gathered to take part in the mitzvah of baking challah at a "Challah Bake" event at the Embassy Grand in Brampton, Ont.

"It was about more than just making the dough," Zeldman said. "It's a very special mitzvah for women, so it wasn't just a cooking show as much as it was learning how to make it, along with exploring the spiritual dimension of making challah and doing the mitzvah." She said media personality Adrienne Gold provided "some inspirational talk," while singer Amy Sky performed, making the event an "uplifting experience."

Among the many other events held throughout the GTA, the Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) hosted a Shabbat dinner for law, dentistry and medical students; Chabad of Markham held a Shabbaton with guest speaker Miriam Swerdlow; and Chabad @ Flamingo held an event featuring comedian Marc Weiner.

The Havdalah Unity Concert, held motza'ei Shabbat at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre in Vaughan, attracted more than 1,800 people and featured Jewish folk singer Shlomo Katz and Israeli chart-topping musician Gad Elbaz, as well as other musical guests, to close the weekend-long event.

Rabbi Glenn Black, CEO of NCSY Canada, who MCed the concert, boasted that the Shabbat Project in Toronto was a success thanks to the 280 volunteers, 24 participating synagogues and thousands of people who took part in the various events.

Opening the show was Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation, backed by the Achdus Choir, who led a havdalah service. They were followed by the Toronto Jewish Male Choir who, to the delight of older members of the audience, sang a number of Yiddish medleys.

Former Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue Cantor Aaron Bensoussan added some Sephardi flare when he sang songs showcasing his Moroccan roots and played the oud. Looking out into the crowd of hundreds of people, some of whom had celebrated Shabbat for the first time, Bensoussan said, "This is a real *ness* [miracle], and I'm so happy to be a part of this."

Before singer and songwriter Abie Rotenberg, joined by singer Shlomo Simcha and the Achdus choir, sang a prayer for the soldiers of Israel, Rotenberg acknowledged the recent attack on Ottawa and the murder of a Canadian soldier, calling it "a brazen attack on democracy."

Shortly before Elbaz closed the show, Katz, a performer of Carlebach-style music, serenaded the crowd with little more than his voice and an acoustic guitar.

Elbaz, who spent this past Shabbat with the BAYT congregation, said he felt at home there because although he grew up in a secular, Sephardi household, when he was nine, his family became religious and began attending an Ashkenazi shul because it was the closest one to their house.

Despite years learning about Ashkenazi traditions, Elbaz' singing style is heavily influenced by his Sephardi roots. Adding another element to his Sephardi sound, Elbaz was joined on stage by the Oziel choir. ■

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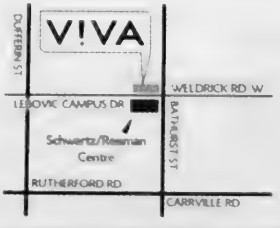

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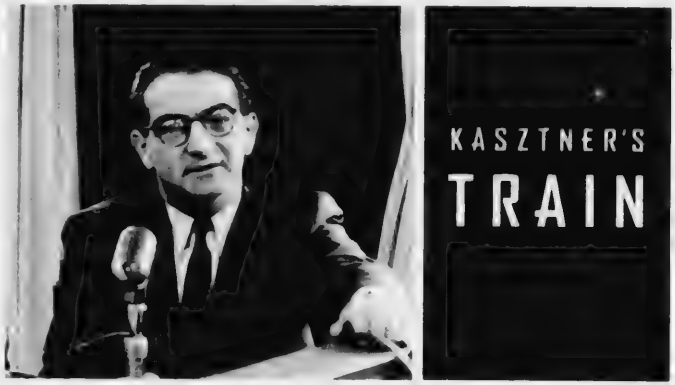
Holocaust Education Week to examine collaboration

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Rudolf Kasztner saved 1,684 Jews, but an Israeli court accused him of collaborating with the Nazis.

Collaboration. Collaborator.

Both words can stir strong feelings – in both positive and negative directions. Scientists have collaborated to produce great achievements; so have artists. Young schoolchildren are graded on how well they collaborate.

But placed in the context of the Holocaust, the words conjure images of ordinary people – clerks, housewives, farmers, militias – plotting with the Nazis to send Jews to their deaths.

They can also refer to those who collaborated to rescue Jews.

Collaboration is the theme of this year's Holocaust Education Week (HEW), which runs Nov. 2 to 9.

The 34th annual program of lectures, art exhibits, films, concerts and panels will explore "the distinct ways in which individuals, groups and governments collaborated during the Shoah," according to a statement from the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

The program will address "many forms of collaboration: from the experiences of those who purposely chose to collaborate with the Nazis in genocide and crimes against humanity – precipitating events such as Kristallnacht and the Hungarian deportations – to those who defied the Nazis and collaborated instead in resistance and even rescue, as in the Kindertransport, and by those now designated as Righteous Among the Nations," the centre said.

It will also examine "how individuals and groups responded to the Nazi persecution and genocide in general," HEW co-chair Dori Ekstein told *The CJN*. "It makes us think about human behaviour and understanding our own behaviour – how we might have reacted [in the same circumstances]."

Collaboration speaks to "accountability and responsibility," Ekstein said. "It also allows us to draw on new understandings of the Holocaust."

In an essay, Doris Bergen, professor of Holocaust studies at the University of Toronto and one of three HEW "experts-in-residence," writes that Adolf Hitler "could not have killed six million Jews on his own." Germany "needed partners – collaborators – to co-operate with them in theft, enslavement and murder, and they found such people everywhere Nazi German power reached."

But the word is more complicated and multifaceted than many may believe, Bergen goes on, and it took many forms: ideological versus opportunistic; intentional, coerced, occasional, systemic.

She asks whether there was Jewish collaboration during the Holocaust.

"Few would use that term today," she wrote, "to describe the role of Jewish councils, ghetto police, kapos or informers."

Yet, at the time, "Jews wrote scathing accusations of other Jews."

One panel, on Nov. 2 at Bialik Hebrew Day School, will examine the touchy subject. Even its title is explosive. "Jewish Leaders in Hell: Looking Back on the Judenrat" will explore the behaviours and strategies of leader of the often hated Judenrats, or Jewish councils put in charge of ghettos.

Another hotly debated issue to this day is the story of Rudolf "Rezso" Kasztner, who negotiated with the Germans to rescue 1,684 Hungarian Jews aboard a train in 1944. Kasztner was assassinated in 1957 in Tel Aviv after an Israeli court accused him of having collaborated with the Nazis.

Whether he was a rescuer or collaborator will be examined by Anna Porter, author of *Kasztner's Train: The True Story of Rezso Kasztner, Unknown Hero of the Holocaust* on Nov. 8 at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

To Eric Cohen, HEW's other co-chair, Kasztner presents a good example of ambiguity when it comes to collaboration.

"Even today, people are undecided whether he was good or bad," Cohen told *The CJN*. "My point of view is pragmatic: if you are one of the people he saved, you think he's good. If you were one of the people whose family didn't get on the train, I don't think you think he's so good.

"I don't think we have a clear-cut answer."

The theme of collaboration is further explored in programs that will examine the heroic actions of so-called Righteous Gentiles and the complicit roles played in the Holocaust by Nazi doctors, Catholic priests and ordinary German women.

What motivated collaborators will be explored on one busy day, Nov. 9, with panels on three individual cases: Rabbi Solomon Schoenfeld, who worked with the British and Jewish leaders in Vienna and Slovakia to rescue thousands of Jews; Benjamin Murmelstein, the last elder of the Judenrat in the Theresienstadt concentration camp and subject of the Claude Lanzmann film *The Last of the Unjust*, and Mordechai Rumkowski, appointed by the Nazis to oversee the Lodz Ghetto.

Cohen notes that among the most impactful lectures during HEW are those by Holocaust survivors. This year, there will be some 50 first-hand testimonies.

"There were over 60 last year," he points out. "Numbers are dwindling every year, and it's really important for people to listen to survivors."

Opening night, on Nov. 2, will pay tribute to the 70th anniversary of Jewish deportations from Hungary, and will feature Ayelet Waldman, author of *Love and Treasure*, a work of historical fiction about the so-called Gold Train, a train carrying stolen property that was intercepted by U.S. troops just after the war. The event will be at the Royal Ontario Museum at 7:30 p.m.

Closing night on Nov. 9 at Beth Tzedec Congregation will commemorate the 76th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night of mayhem and murder across Germany and Austria that marked the beginning of the end for European Jewry.

For details, including information on programs before and after HEW, visit holocausteducationweek.com. ■

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Survivor honoured for education efforts

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Standing before 400 friends, loved ones and well-wishers on Sunday, Nate Leipciger quipped: "Finally I have a bar mitzvah party."

Although the line merited chuckles, Leipciger then recounted a horrific time. His real bar mitzvah took place in 1941, in the thick of the Holocaust, at a time his own father was already in a concentration camp.

The Polish-born Leipciger, 86, survived several concentration camps, including Auschwitz. He came to Canada in 1948 and went on to become a stalwart of Holocaust education, speaking to thousands of students about the dangers of racism and the need to confront it with speech and action. That's why Leipciger was paid tribute on Sunday at the Toronto Reference Library by Facing History and Ourselves, which conferred on him its first "Upstander Award."

Founded in 1976, Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization that establishes resources, seminars and materials to counter racism, prejudice, stereotyping and bullying.

The tribute heard that more than 95,000 educators worldwide use the organization's materials, reaching more than three million students. Some of its work was introduced in Ontario in 1981, with workshops offered in several school boards.

A Canadian arm of the group was established in 2008, with Leipciger a founding member. The Toronto office provides professional development and resources to more than 1,800 educators in Ontario and across the country, reaching some 100,000 students in 200 schools.

Leipciger is a well-known figure in Toronto's Holocaust education community. He was the co-founder and first chair of the Holocaust Education and Memorial Centre of Toronto and chaired the Holocaust Remembrance and Education Committee for six years. He has been on several March of the Living trips to Poland.

And for more than 40 years, he has spoken to local elementary, high school and university students not only about his war-era experiences, but about the lessons they provide, chiefly, the need to speak out against racism. Those lessons were well-learned by Ryan Venedam and Stephen Goslinksi, students at Woburn Collegiate Institute in Scarborough. Speaking at the tribute, the two lauded Leipciger as "the most brilliant example of an 'upstander' – someone who stands up for others."

Inspired by his talks, the two students began producing podcasts on the struggles refugees in Canada face. "We could not have come this far or learned this much without him, and for that, we would like to extend a massive thank you," they said.

More recently, Leipciger has advocated for the Pusumas, a Roma family targeted by far-right thugs in their native Hungary. Jozsef Pusuma, his wife Timea Darozci and their daughter Lulu, 6, have lived for nearly three years in limbo in a Toronto church after being denied admission to Canada.

Surrounded by his wife, Bernice, three daughters and nine grandchildren, and sporting his trademark black leather cap, Leipciger recalled that he arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau on Aug. 2, 1943, at the age of 15. "I looked like 12," he said. "Why was I snatched from the teeth of death?"

It was thanks to his father, who on several occasions, convinced Nazi guards to spare his son's life. "He put his life at risk many times."

Inmates were told life expectancy at the notorious killing centre was four months. "My mind went blank in disbelief and fear. They were actually killing us. My mind could not process that information."

His voice cracking, he said, "We committed no crime. We had no trial. And yet, we were, so to speak, on death row. And we asked, 'Where was the world? Where is God?' There was no answer."

On Yom Kippur 1943, he learned his mother and sisters were gassed on arrival. He and his father were the family's sole survivors.

In an interview with *The CJN*, Leipciger was humble about the tribute. "It's not me who's being honoured, but all the survivors who speak and those who are traumatized and cannot speak," he said. "So I'm speaking for all of them. I'm their voice and the voice of the people who didn't make it."

He called Holocaust education outside the Jewish educational system "very wanting. We have to fix it." In partnership with the Toronto District School Board, Facing History and Ourselves developed an elective Grade 11 course titled "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity." The only such course to win approval from the education ministry, it now has more than 500 students in 22 schools. ■

Nate Leipciger with his wife Bernice
RON CSILLAG PHOTO

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Maccabi Haifa keeps its close against the Raptors

SHERI SHEFA
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Despite a hectic and demanding 10-day NBA tour that brought one of Israel's best professional basketball teams to four North American cities, Maccabi Haifa managed to keep the game competitive in its 92-85 loss to the Toronto Raptors.

Having played – and lost – in three previous NBA exhibition games against the Washington Wizards, Portland Trailblazers and Sacramento Kings earlier this month, Maccabi Haifa took to the court without their captain Dagan Yivzori, who tore his quadriceps in the game against the Wizards.

Yivzori said although Maccabi Haifa came into these matches as "underdogs," the opportunity to play against NBA players on a tour that the team has done four times over the past five years is a huge benefit.

"I think it's good for American basketball fans to know there is different kind of basketball in different places in the world," he said.

"I think it is a great experience for players that would never get to experience the NBA to see what the NBA is about."

He added that the reception his team gets from fans is an added bonus.

"Every time we go, the Jewish community comes out to the games, we see Israeli flags, and people shouting in Hebrew. It's very nice, it's very fun. It's heartwarming to see the welcome."

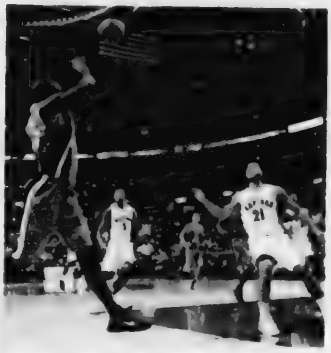
Almost 16,000 people came out for the game, many of whom were waving Israeli flags and were cheering for Maccabi Haifa, the 2013-14 Israeli Basketball Super League runner-up to Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Although Maccabi Haifa trailed for most of the game, two back-to-back turnovers in the fourth quarter cost the Raptors the lead. Maccabi Haifa was up by five points with less than four minutes left in the game, but the Raptors stepped up their defensive game and went on a 16-0 run to get the win.

Despite the loss, Maccabi Haifa head coach Rami Hadar said he was happy with the way his team played.

"It took us some time in the first quarter to get into the game, but then we played good defence that gave us the option to run fast breaks and finish easy lay ups. I think at the end, they elevated their level of defence, and we couldn't get into the spots we wanted to get to and to their credit, they are a better team, better talent," Hadar said.

"I think we played well, we played tough. Especially in the second half, from the middle of the third quarter to the middle of the fourth quarter, we played, I think, the best basketball we've played this season."



Maccabi Haifa's Leroy Hickerson heads for the hoop as the Raptors Greivis Vasquez, centre, Bruno Cabocio, left, and Terrence Ross defend. SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan, who turned over the ball four times in his 18 minutes on the court, said the number of turnovers was likely what kept the game so close.

"We had 25, 26 turnovers... they were gunning for the ball every time, they were coming out big. It was very unconventional compared to the normal style of basketball we play against," DeRozan said.

"When you're out there you have to make adjustments on the fly, because that's a style we're not used to playing."

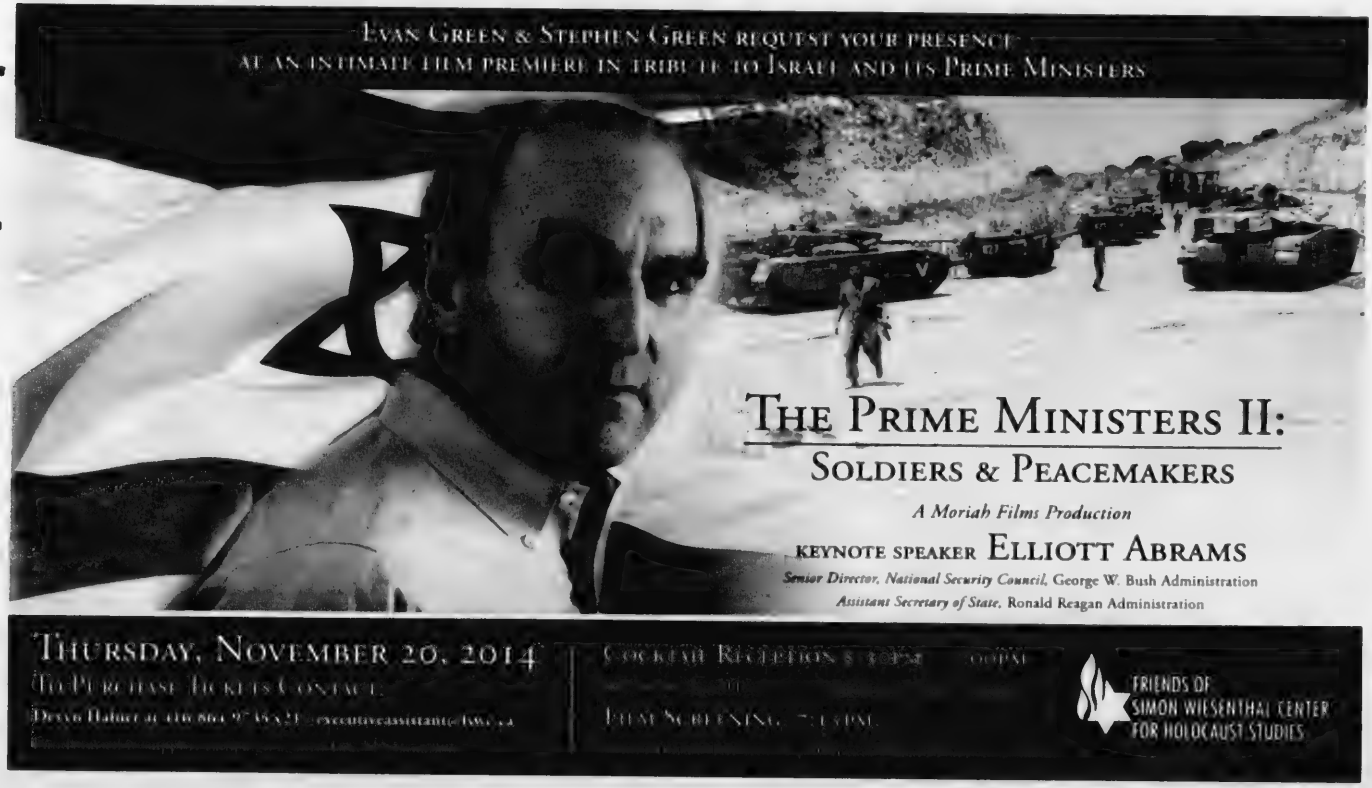
Benjamin Ohana, who was cheering for Maccabi Haifa mostly because he wanted to show his support for Israel, said he was impressed with the team's play.

"Against a professional [NBA] team, I think they're doing all right. They're staying in the game and that's what matters. They're playing with their hearts," he said.

"I hope people see that they are a good team and they shouldn't be underestimated. It's a fun team to watch and it's always fun to have international matches."

The game was played just hours after news broke about the shooting on Parliament Hill. In addition to heightened security, a moment of silence was observed before tipoff.

Reacting to the news out of Ottawa, Hadar said, "for us, we're used to stuff like this.. [but] this happening in [Canada] is a little strange. We sympathize with the victims - we know how they feel." ■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School struck by vandal

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The Posluns branch of Associated Hebrew Schools on Neptune Drive was the target of a late-night vandalism incident earlier this month, as a lone male spray-painted a trio of disturbing – and somewhat odd – words on or near school property.

Video cameras captured a male vandal spray-painting the words, "Kill All," on the school. But in an odd twist, the same vandal was also seen spray-painting the words "love" on a small wall on school property and on a nearby seniors residence.

The Shaarei Tefillah Congregation across the street was not affected.

Toronto police were notified of the incident, and the case was turned over to its intelligence branch, which includes the hate crime unit. The words were removed before classes resumed, and children did not see the graffiti, said Elliott Brodkin, Associated's executive director and CFO.

The incident took place at around 11 p.m. a day after kids had spent the night at the school on a sleepover program during Sukkot. "It was seen the next day, I attended with the police, and it was power-washed right off," Brodkin said.

In an email to parents, Brodkin highlighted steps taken by the school, including informing police and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) of the incident and keeping in place security measures implemented at the start of the school year.

"Both Toronto police and CIJA have indicated that there is no additional risk to the Posluns community as a result of this incident and that, in their opinion, students, staff and parents are safe," Brodkin said.

"Of course it's troubling that someone would paint on a school building. As to intentions, I can't speculate," he told *The CJN*.

The incident occurred well before last week's terror attacks in Ottawa and Quebec. But even before those incidents, Associated had hired security guards to monitor its facilities when the school year started.

"Everyone felt comfortable putting security guards in place given what took place in the summer" in Israel, Brodkin said.

The security guards have been retained and parents may notice a greater police presence in the neighbourhood, plus visits by uniformed officers, Brodkin added.

"As always, we ask parents to remain vigilant while on or near school premises and to report anything questionable to the school office," he said in his message to parents. ■

Names, Not Numbers

CJN news editor Daniel Wolgelerenter spoke to the Grade 8 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School earlier this month about how to interview Holocaust survivors. Netivot is the only Canadian school that takes part in Names, Not Numbers, a U.S.-based project in which middle and high school students interview survivors on video and the results are edited into a film to be shown publicly and archived at Yad Vashem and the National Library of Israel. More than 450 survivors have taken part in the initiative since 2003.

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Israel, Saskatchewan to foster 'technological synergies'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Israel's reputation for providing high-tech solutions with commercial applications continues to grow, sometimes in places you'd least expect.

In Alberta, companies operating in the oil sands have turned to Israel for a technology that helps them reduce their costs while purifying water before it is returned to the ground.

Now, Saskatchewan is also looking to Israel for its advanced technology.

Representatives of the two jurisdictions agreed recently to implement the Saskatchewan-Israel R&D Collaboration Program, designed to facilitate industry-led research and development while enhancing economic ties. The venture will be managed by the Canada-Israel Industrial Research Development Foundation (CIIRDF).

"Western Canadians are starting to realize that Israel has capabilities that fit their needs," said Henri Rothschild, president of CIIRDF.

"Through this bold initiative, CIIRDF will identify technological synergies between Saskatchewan and Israeli companies in four priority areas," he said. "This will generate many R&D partnerships that can be funded through our existing programs... It is a model that accelerates R&D and revenue generation for collaborating firms. The partnerships that emerge from this program will deliver long-term economic benefit to Saskatchewan and Israel."

Rothschild noted that Saskatchewan "is one of the biggest centres of innovation in the country," with a high ratio of R&D spending to GDP.

The CIIRDF's role in the program is to make a "shidduch," he said, using the Hebrew term for matchmaking. "We are going to do the heavy lifting," by matching Canadian business needs with Israeli solutions, he added.

In Saskatchewan, the minister responsible for innovation and trade, Jeremy Harrison, said, "By joining forces and investing in research and technology development areas of common interest, Saskatchewan and Israel both stand to benefit from the development of new, innovative approaches that bolster the productivity of our traditional economic sectors and spur joint investment in the formation of new companies to develop and commercialize new technologies arising from this partnership.

"Israel is well known for its prowess as a 'startup' nation, and Saskatchewan looks forward to engaging this expertise as we continue to strengthen our innovation ecosystem," Harrison said.

Jeremy Harrison

Rothschild suggested the Saskatchewan economy could benefit from Israeli knowledge in areas such as resource extraction, water management, agriculture, energy and nuclear research.

CIIRDF has the expertise, language skills and knowhow to bring the two sides together to overcome any linguistic and cultural barriers that might inhibit joint programs. That will enhance corporate profitability on both sides, he added.

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak said the agreement builds on Canada's and Israel's common democratic values by adding co-operation in research and innovation.

"I am confident that this new program will not only improve our economies and bring value-added jobs to Saskatchewan and Israel, but it will also lead to innovative technologies that improve lives around the world," Barak said.

Harrison said Saskatchewan will invest $50,000 in a jointly funded pilot project with CIIRDF and seek an equivalent amount from the government of Israel. The money will go "to conduct a series of activities aimed at the identification of suitable research and technology partners and specific bilateral projects between the two jurisdictions."

Following completion of the pilot project at the end of March 2015, Saskatchewan will "gauge the program's success based on a number of outcomes including the number of joint collaborations and partnerships identified and initiated, patents issued, new technologies or products brought to market, the level of joint investment activity, companies created, to name a few," Harrison said.

"Israel's capabilities are not well known across Saskatchewan industry and public organizations," the minister continued. "However, there are pockets of awareness of Israel's expertise with water management and agriculture research they are quite limited. This project represents an excellent opportunity to grow awareness of each other's expertise and common interests." ■

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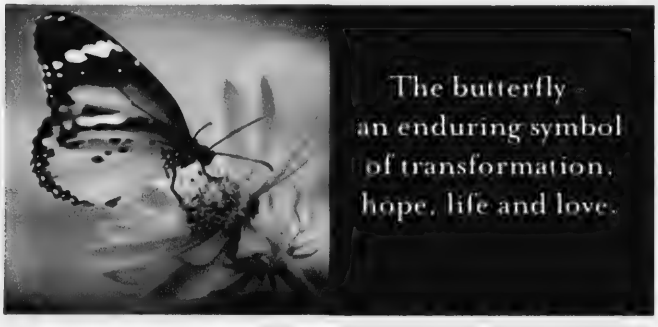

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Unwanted Islamic paper spooks condo residents

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

David Freeman doesn't want to say he was frightened or nervous when he received a copy of *The Islamic Post* on his doorstep, folded into an issue of the *Toronto Star*. But he does say he was made to feel "uncomfortable" and he would like the *Star* to dismiss the paper carrier for his actions.

"I worry whether he represents the tip of the iceberg," Freeman said last week.

Freeman said a four-page insert from the August 2013 issue of the *Islamic Post* was included in copies of the *Toronto Star* delivered earlier this month to his condominium building in the Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue area, as well as to another building nearby. It contained the phrases, "No true Muslim fears death" and they "will be presented before the almighty."

"It was a propaganda piece extolling the virtues of Islam, quoting the Qur'an extensively with much commentary," Freeman said. It carried an article on Egypt and "several others that show anti-western bias." The most egregious was one on Israel saying that despite its small population, Israelis are accused of amassing a huge percentage of the total wealth of the world, he added.

THE ISLAMIC POST

The paper was inserted in the *Toronto Star*.

Given news reports about Islamic extremism, Freeman said he wondered whether the carrier "is radicalized, a threat?"

However, one of the *Star's* circulation directors told *The CJN* the incident likely won't be repeated.

The carrier was acting on his own. Delivery personnel are not allowed to add anything to the paper or make any changes to it, the director said.

The *Star* received several complaints from subscribers and brought the matter to the attention of the carrier's employer. "He's been reprimanded. It won't happen again," the director said.

> *You move into a building and you think you're safe*

Those assurances don't calm another recipient of the insert. A woman who saw the material said, "I am afraid. This man is delivering papers here. I just want him out of the building."

The woman, who did not want her name used, said she had spoken to others who had received the same insert, "and they are just as upset. People are afraid."

The woman referred to news reports of Islamic extremists killing innocent people and said of the carrier, "I don't know him and what his motives are."

"You move into a building and you think you're safe, and he's going door to door dropping papers in the building."

She said her concerns grew when she learned the delivery man exchanged angry words with the concierge when he was told not to leave *The Islamic Post* in the other paper. "He actually became quite angry," she said.

The CJN could not confirm the identity of the carrier and efforts to reach him for comment were unsuccessful.

Freeman said he received a copy of the *Star* with *The Islamic Post* even though he doesn't subscribe to the *Star*. He thought at first he received his neighbour's copy by mistake, but learned they too had received the paper with the same insert.

"It was entirely inappropriate for this delivery person to insert religious and political propaganda into his daily delivery," said Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach for The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. "The *Toronto Star* has made it clear to the individual that such action is unacceptable. We expect that a repeat offence will entail more serious consequences.

"We are making contact with the *Toronto Star* to ensure that distributors understand the *Star's* policy in this matter," Rudner added.

Freeman would like to see the carrier dismissed. "I'm uneasy about this guy delivering papers in our building," he said. ■

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JCC was on heightened alert, but not lockdown

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Michael Regenstreif, editor of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, speaking from his office on the Jewish community campus in the city's west end early in the afternoon of Oct. 22, said the campus was in a state of "heightened security," not lockdown.

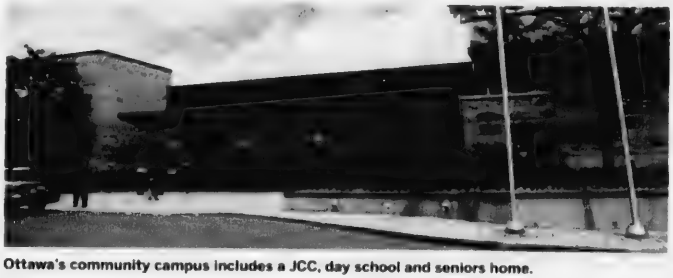
A security guard was posted at the front entrance of the Jewish community centre, which houses the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and other community organizations.

People were only being allowed into the building if they could show proper identification, but were allowed to leave, said Regenstreif, who himself left and returned to the building during the crisis.

The Jewish campus, which also houses a Jewish day school and an old-age home, is about a 15-minute drive from Parliament Hill, he said.

The campus always has guards on patrol and the school always has one at its entrance, Regenstreif said. "It's my understanding all of the schools in the Ottawa region are in lockdown [Jewish and non-Jewish.]"

Regenstreif said the general mood on the campus was less one of concern for personal security, than worry over what is going on in the "very tense" city.



Ottawa's community campus includes a JCC, day school and seniors home.

"We are not particularly scared – CIJA put out an alert that there is no threat as such to the Jewish community, but everyone knows someone who works around Parliament Hill. My layout person's brother works at the Department of National Defence."

In Montreal, Rabbi Reuben Poupko, chair of the Jewish community's security co-ordinating committee, said police have stepped up patrols around synagogues and Jewish schools at the request of the community.

"We are very satisfied with the response of the police," he said. "All our buildings are open and functioning normally." He is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron in Côte St. Luc.

The day before, commenting on what happened in St. Jean, Rabbi Poupko said, "There is no reason to believe that Montreal or Canada are immune to the ongoing phenomenon of radicalized Muslims seeking to harm innocents in the West.

"This is not the first incident in Quebec [tied to those who espouse Islamic extremism], and the Jewish community was the target of terrorism 10 years ago with the firebombing [of a Jewish school in St. Laurent.]"

The perpetrators of the firebombing of an Outremont yeshiva and attempted firebombing outside the Snowdon YM-YWHA a few years later were also found to have been influenced by Islamic radicalism, he said.

The attack on Canadian soldiers should be a reminder that not only Israelis or Jews are the targets of Islamists, but all Westerners, he said

Rabbi Poupko thinks Canadian authorities must enhance security measures and monitoring of potential threats by extremists. "They have to do more than take their passports away."

In Toronto, both Associated Hebrew Schools and Bialik Hebrew Day School issued statements saying that while there was no change in their security protocols, police would be adding extra patrols around the campuses.

On Oct. 22, the Air Canada Centre added extra security for the exhibition basketball game between the Toronto Raptors and the visiting Israeli side, Maccabi Haifa. ■

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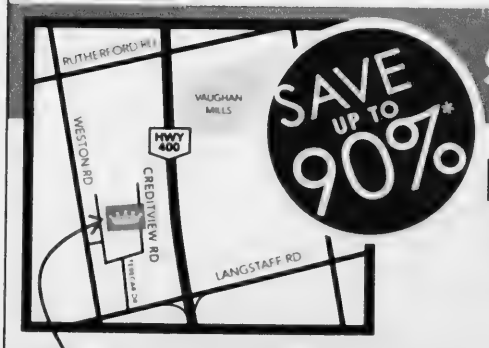

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Israel experiments with high-rise cemeteries

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

In Israel, it should come as no surprise that Jewish cemeteries are now vertical instead of horizontal.

Tuvia Sagiv and Uri Ponger, independent architectural consultants with a specialty in dense burial design, say it's unreasonable to expect otherwise in a country where residents live in tall apartment buildings, one on top of the other.

"There is simply no room," Sagiv told *Associated Press*. "If we've already agreed to live one on top of the other, then we can die one on top of the other."

Sagiv designed the burial system at Tel Aviv's Yarkon Cemetery, which, once completed, will provide kosher burial space for 250,000 graves in numerous vertical structures. The first three of those structures are scheduled for completion by the end of the year at a cost of $49 million. Those built afterward will boast elevators, computerized database stations for locating specific burial sites and accessibility for the disabled.

They and other structures like this promise to create a solution to the burial space dilemma in Israel, where 35,000 Jews die each year and an additional 1,500 are flown in for burial from other parts of the world. Vertical cemeteries are backed by the government. Individual outdoor graves – with the exception of those already purchased – are no longer available for sale in Israel.

What's important about these vertical cemeteries is their environmental friendliness, Sagiv told *The CJN*. "They are green because they save land and create a pleasant environment instead of huge areas of tombstones," he said. "Moreover, they can hold six times more tombs than a regular cemetery."

While it's a new idea for us today, the inspiration for such high-density burials came from biblical times. Sagiv and his colleagues approached Israel's Chief Rabbinate back in 2009 with pictures of ancient Jewish tombs where the dead were laid on top of each other. With the caveat that strict religious guidelines be followed, the rabbinate gave the idea a green light.

Dirt columns run throughout the building to fulfil the Jewish law that burial spaces be connected to the earth. And the walls that separate each chamber are cement, ensuring that the dead are buried as individuals.

In Canada, vertical burials have not entered the discussion, and Jewish burial space still appears to be in healthy supply and readily available. In Toronto, up to 1,500 Jews die each year and approximately half of those deaths end up with burials at Pardes Chaim or Pardes Shalom, which comprise 200 acres and 89 acres respectively. Pardes Chaim has a capacity of 70,000 to 90,000 graves, only 1,200 of which are occupied, said Howard Mammon, executive director of Toronto Hebrew Memorial Parks. At Pardes Shalom the capacity is 40,000.

Philip Covshoff, a board member at Bathurst Lawn and Dawes Road cemeteries, estimates there's sufficient real estate at those two cemeteries to last anywhere from 25 up to 40 years. "The only discussion we've had is the concern that our gates stay open for another 40 years and that there's funds available to pay the staff for upkeep," he says. "It's working out well for Dawes Road, and Bathurst Lawn will have to get its act together to make sure it happens there, too."

Andrew Gann, president of the board at Bathurst Lawn Cemetery, said he'd be very surprised if vertical cemeteries took hold in Canada.

"Land is valuable, but it's not that valuable," he said. "To get people to accept a vertical cemetery... I don't even know if Canadian rabbis would accept it."

In general there's been a lot of foresight in Toronto when it comes to Jewish burial, Gann said.

"At the time that Bathurst Lawn Cemetery was founded, Bathurst Street was farmland, but its founders were thinking of the future. The Pardes cemeteries seem far out of town at the moment, but in the future they'll probably be as central as Bathurst Lawn is today."

At the Pardes cemeteries, a Jewish burial costs $4,900, which includes interment rights, the opening and closing of the grave, the concrete monument foundation and burial license fee.

Those who die in Vancouver need fuller pockets to pay the $11,000 for a burial plot and another $11,000 for the funeral. "We have up to 50 years before our primary cemetery, Schara Tzedek Cemetery in New Westminster, is full," said Howard Jampolsky, executive director of the Schara Tzedek Cemetery board.

"But we're always passively looking for land that can be used for cemetery purposes, as close to Vancouver as possible. We have a very clear requirement to bury deceased people in the earth, and yes, we know of methods that can be employed for vertical burials inside walls filled with earth. These are concepts we're broadly thinking about, and it may come to that, someday, to get the maximum yield out of our properties." ■

McGill anti-Israel motion fails

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Jordan Devon with Aliza Saskin, co-chair of Israel on Campus

An anti-Israel resolution was shelved indefinitely by the McGill University undergraduates' association at its general assembly on Oct. 22.

At a heated meeting attended by an unusually high number of students, a motion to prevent the resolution from being debated or brought forward in the future in exactly the same form passed 402-337.

The resolution called on the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) to "stand in solidarity with the people of the occupied Palestinian territories."

It condemned Israel's "siege" of Gaza and "illegal" settlement expansion, as well as violence committed against Palestinian civilians and the destruction of schools, universities and hospitals in the territories.

The resolution was sponsored by Solidarity with Palestinian Human Rights, an SSMU affiliated club, and bore the minimum 100 signatures.

The resolution also contained a clause suggesting those who espouse the Palestinian cause on campus don't get a fair hearing, and called on the SSMU to "provide a safe platform for students to voice their views and experience accessibly."

In the 10 days leading up to the general assembly, opponents of the resolution mounted a vigorous campaign under the slogan "Don't divide McGill: vote no."

It was led by Toronto native Jordan Devon of the group Israel on Campus at McGill, who put forward the motion to have the resolution shelved.

Devon said the "no" side was much broader than his organization and included Jews and non-Jews, as well as students from across the political spectrum, including critics of Israeli policy. "We were able to quickly mobilize hundreds of students," he said.

The no side's main argument was that the resolution was "one-sided and failed to recognize the plethora of nuances of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Opponents also felt it was inappropriate for their student government to take a position condemning one side in a complex international issue. The SSMU, Devon said, has not taken sides in any other conflict abroad.

Devon said this view found sympathy among students from many different ethnic and religious minorities who could identify with that reasoning.

The resolution was endorsed by the independent student newspaper the *McGill Daily*. "Taking a stance against Israel's violations would... challenge the prevailing narrative of support for Israel's actions, making campus a safer space for people affected by the Israeli state's violence," its editorial board wrote.

Devon noted that in 2009, a similar anti-Israel resolution was brought before a SSMU general assembly and was similarly shelved.

SSMU general assemblies are held twice a year and are open to all members.

SSMU vice-president for internal affairs Daniel Chaim said that while the same resolution can't be put on the agenda at a future general assembly, a similar version whose title has been changed or modified could be. The next general assembly is scheduled for the winter, probably February, he said.

Chaim said the turnout of about 750 was one of the largest ever at an SSMU general assembly, but he regretted that the proceedings were not civil and that the SSMU executive now finds itself being criticized by both sides.

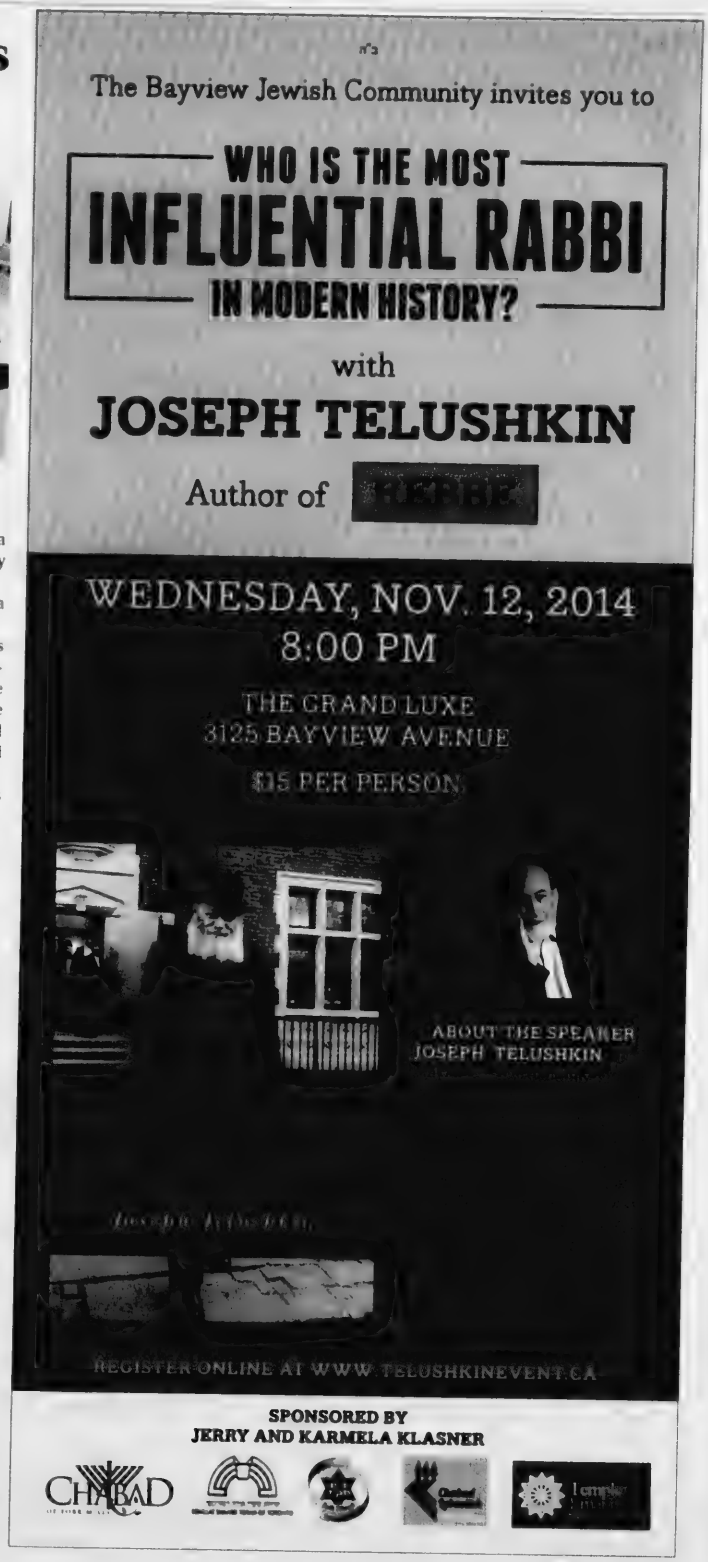
He said it was clear most people had come because of the resolution. After it was shelved, the room emptied leaving only about 150 people. "The general assembly was not the right venue for this issue," he said, "There should have been a forum beforehand for discussion."

The SSMU executive was powerless to keep it off the agenda, Chaim said, because the petitioners had acted in accordance with the constitution.

After the motion to table passed, supporters of the resolution attempted to have another resolution on the agenda in "support of a campus free from harmful military technology development" amended. They put forward "much harsher" clauses, in Chaim's view, but a motion was adopted disallowing that amendment.

Devon added that it is "ludicrous" to suggest that pro-Palestinian students cannot express their opinions openly on campus. "All voices are heard at McGill. No one is being marginalized, nor should they be."

The shelving of the motion was applauded by the international Israel advocacy group StandWithUs. Its Canadian executive director, Meryle Kates, said it "employed misinformation and misused the language of social justice to attack Israel politically." ■



THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 30, 2014

JGH denies it's the subject of construction probe

CJN STAFF
MONTREAL

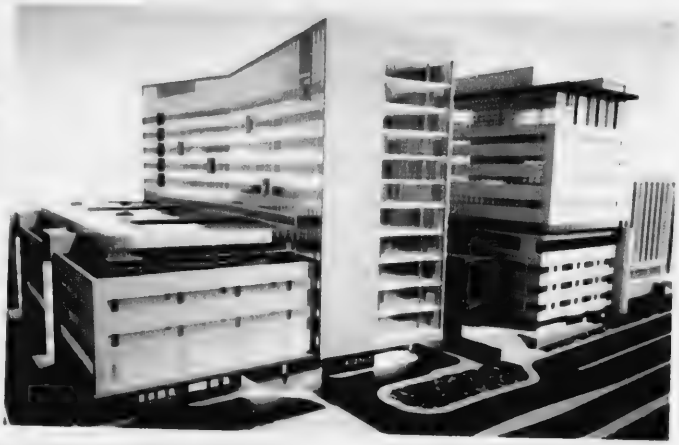
After two days of silence, Montreal's Jewish General Hospital (JGH) issued a terse statement on Oct. 23 regarding reports that Quebec's anti-corruption squad is investigating construction cost overruns related to the hospital's expansion.

"In relation to some media reports which appeared [Oct. 22], the JGH states that it is not the subject of an investigation by police authorities. Rather, an investigation is currently underway into the activities of certain of the hospital's former suppliers and contractors," the unsigned statement reads.

"The JGH is aware of this investigation and is co-operating fully with the authorities."

JGH officials were not answering any questions from the media on the matter.

Some local media outlets, including the *Gazette* and *La Presse*, which cited police sources, reported that on Oct. 21 about 100 investigators from UPAC, the provincial anti-corruption unit, as well as Revenue Quebec and personnel from the Régie des des bâtiments, which regulates the construction industry, carried out eight search warrants in connection with a year-long investigation into construction at the JGH.



An artist's rendering of JGH's yet-to-be-completed Pavilion K MCGILL UNIVERSITY PHOTO

The locations of the searches were not made known by UPAC.

The JGH has in the past denied that it has exceeded the budget for the yet-to-be-completed Pavilion K and has said that if that did occur, its foundation would make up the gap in government funding.

> *An investigation is underway into the activities of certain of the hospital's former suppliers and contractors.*

In April, there were media reports that UPAC was investigating allegedly fraudulent billing for a total of $50,000 in connection with the construction project.

At that time, the JGH said it was the one who brought the alleged irregularities to the attention of authorities as soon as they were brought to its attention in the fall of last year.

The person in charge of the construction project, Philippe Castiel, no longer works at the JGH.

UPAC (Unité permanente anticorruption) was created in 2011 by the provincial government to combat corruption and collusion. ■

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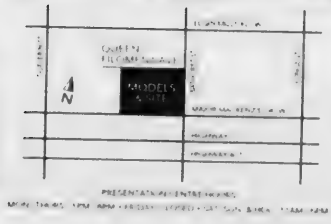

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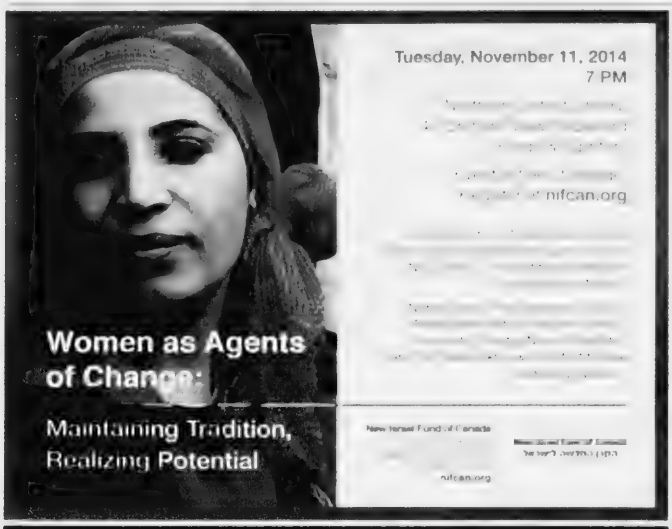

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We express our most heartfelt condolences to her children Michael and Evey Kamin and Ruth and Robert Chelin as well as to her grandchildren and great grandchildren. May her memory be a blessing to them all.

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Slain Israeli boy's mother says no to revenge

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The mother of an Israeli teenager murdered by Hamas terrorists in June pleaded for Jews not to be vengeful, though she does believe that Israel's operation in Gaza this past summer was a "very justified war."

Rachel Frenkel's son Naftali, 16, was one of three boys kidnapped on June 12 in Gush Etzion on the West Bank as they were hitchhiking home from their yeshivot.

"It was a no-brainer," said Frenkel in an address Oct. 23 at Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron of her immediate condemnation of the revenge killing of an innocent Arab youth in Jerusalem a couple of days after the deaths of the three Israeli boys were confirmed on June 30.

"We couldn't imagine Jews did that... We were horrified. It's against everything we stood for," Frenkel said.

"We felt no parent should go through what we were going through... There is no difference between the blood of an Arab boy and the blood of a Jewish boy."

Her address was the kickoff for Montreal's participation in the Shabbat Project, an international effort, now in its second year, to encourage as many Jews as possible to keep the Shabbat of Oct. 24-25 in the traditional manner.

Frenkel and her husband, Avi, were still sitting shivah when the arrests of the three alleged kidnappers and murderers of 16-year-old Mohammed Abu Khdeir were made. She asked her brother-in-law to speak on behalf of the family, and when they got up, she and Avi spoke out.

"Why shouldn't we say it was horrifying?"

Frenkel said she tried to meet the boy's parents, but they refused. "My impression was that they were under pressure from their community not to do so."

She was "relieved" when Israeli forces killed the two suspects in the Israeli boys' murders, not out of vengeance, but because "they will never be released in future deals or laugh in my face in court."

Frenkel is a charismatic woman who maintained a smile throughout her appearance at the Côte St. Luc synagogue even while recalling the most painful moments. She never once hinted at anger or bitterness.

Professionally, she teaches advanced Jewish studies at Matan and Nishmat, Orthodox educational institutions for women.

The Frenkels and four of their children spent a week in Montreal as the guests of the Dym and Sochaczevski families, members of Beth Israel Beth Aaron. It was their first vacation since the tragedy, she said.

Rachel Frenkel is surrounded by well-wishers after her talk at Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron.

Frenkel's main message was one of gratitude for the outpouring of support she and the other two families received throughout their ordeal from Israelis of all backgrounds and from Jews throughout the world and across the denominational spectrum, an empathy she finds almost surreal.

She called the way Israelis rallied during the days before the boys' fate was known unprecedented and believes this solidarity prepared the country for the Gaza war launched in early July.

That war "saved tens maybe hundreds of lives," she said, because the Israeli army destroyed the tunnels that were leading to right under populated civilian areas.

"I have never assumed I understand the ways of God, that one thing leads to another," she said. "But the solidarity over those 18 days brought us to the war prepared, able to withstand what could have torn us apart."

Her lecture, attended by a capacity audience, was the first major Jewish community event in Montreal since the killings of the two soldiers in St. Jean-sur-Richelieu, about 50 kilometres southeast of Montreal, and in Ottawa.

Visible security was not abnormally tight. Private guards checked the bags of everyone entering the synagogue.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko called for a moment of silence to remember Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Cpl. Nathan Cirillo and, his voice choked with emotion, Chaya Zissel Braun, the baby killed in a suspected terrorist act the day before in Jerusalem. ■

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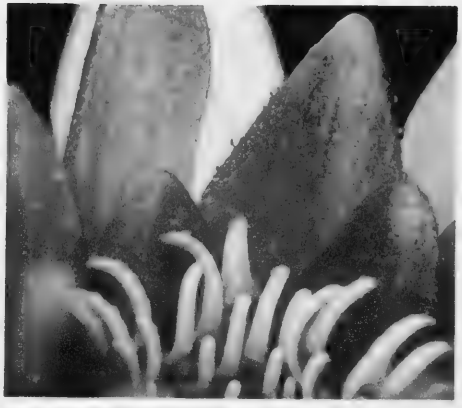

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Agencies come together to fight poverty

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Although Jewish social service agencies across the country have spent decades working to alleviate poverty in their respective communities, as national Jewish poverty rates continue to climb, service providers are banding together to try a new approach.

Earlier this month, the National Think Tank on Jewish Poverty in Canada – a group established last year and led by agencies including Jewish Family Services in Ottawa and Vancouver, Jewish Immigrant Aid Service (JIAS) in Toronto, and various federations across the country – released a statement that said raising awareness about Jewish poverty is the first step toward alleviating it.

"We cannot change what we don't acknowledge... We need to develop community-specific responses to the needs of our members living in poverty. We need to invest in our youth and support our seniors. We need to hold governments accountable and ensure that they create, fund and deliver adequate social and economic policies, programs and services to end injustices, including poverty, and prevent them, to the benefit of our communities as part of the greater whole... We need to act," the statement said.

"While the issue of poverty is managed on a provincial basis, this national body strives to be part of a national solution – to share best practices, broaden awareness and delve deeper into the specific differences and strategies within the Jewish community."

In Toronto, Hillel Toronto, Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS), JIAS Toronto, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) Toronto, Kehilla Residential Programme, Miles Nadal JCC, UFC/UIA and Ve'ahavta, convened by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, are all working together to break the cycle of poverty.

Last week, after the United Nations' International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, these agencies held a Jewish Poverty Awareness Day, during which information tables were set up at Jewish institutions in the GTA, and people were encouraged to take an online Jewish poverty quiz.

Robin Gofine, vice-president of strategic community planning and engagement at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and head of its "Collective Impact Strategy" on poverty, said federation has started to think about large-scale social issues in a very different way.

"We decided as an organization, with the input and support of the [agency heads] around the table, including Richard Cummings at JF&CS, Janis Roth at JIAS Toronto, Lori Shekter-Wolfson at JVS and Nancy Singer at Kehilla, to look at developing collectively a strategy to address and hopefully reduce poverty in the Jewish community of Toronto," Gofine said.

She said a major portion of funds raised by the annual UJA campaign go toward addressing poverty. In 2013, the federation allocated 15 per cent of its annual campaign funds – $7.6 million – to social services.

"Jewish Family and Child, on a daily basis, is addressing poverty in the Jewish community and supporting the Jewish poor in Toronto in many ways. JVS is looking at employment issues, Kehilla is looking at housing issues, but we have never as a community banded together to look at impacting the system in a large and comprehensive and significant way. So that is really the exciting opportunity," she said.

Fran Chodak, a JF&CS social worker, is the co-ordinator of a new program called the STEP (Striving to End Poverty) project, which aims to provide people with access to education, and career and life skills programs to achieve financial independence, as well as access to JF&CS services.

She said that the idea is also to partner with other local agencies that are working toward the same goals.

"I think there is an effort now for agencies to gather together around this issue, and we're starting to do so more and more. Now we have this STEP program that we are initiating that we hope will be a unique way of delivering some services that will empower people to move out of poverty," Chodak said.

"One of the projects that STEP will undertake is to raise awareness in the Jewish community about Jewish poverty, but also to raise awareness in the general community that there is Jewish poverty."

Fran Chodak

In Montreal, Leah Berger, a senior planning associate for Federation CJA in its department of strategic planning and community relations, is co-ordinator of the federation's social advocacy committee, a coalition of local social service agencies and groups. She said the coalition focuses mainly on changing policy.

"The social service programs that are provided by our frontline social service agencies have a critical impact on individuals and families who are living in poverty. The social advocacy committee approaches these issues from a policy perspective, meaning that until the policy, until the core of the issue is addressed, the problem will never truly be addressed," Berger said. "It's an inclusive approach, meaning that we seek improved social policies for all Quebecers, and we seek to accomplish this by linking up with larger coalitions, organizations Quebec-wide in the larger community."

Susan Karpman, director of community services and immigration at Ometz, an employment and social service provider in Montreal, said poverty can't be solved by the Jewish community alone.

"That's why we do invest a lot of resources in terms of working with and advocating... for a [better] living wage, for reasonable welfare benefits, for cost of living, day care," Karpman said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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Netanyahu decries 'flaccid' response after attack

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

The day after an East Jerusalem man with ties to Hamas drove his car onto a light rail platform, killing a three-month-old baby, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out at the international community for failing to criticize Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

A second victim, a female tourist from Ecuador died from her injuries last Sunday.

Abbas "both glorifies the murderers and also embraces the organization to which the terrorists belong, Hamas," Netanyahu said during a briefing with security officials in Jerusalem's national police headquarters. "And faced with these actions of the Authority chairman, we find only a flaccid [response] internationally. [World leaders] are unwilling to say two words, even one word of criticism of him [Abbas]. We do not share this weakness. We will stand firmly for our rights and obligations to defend our capital.

"The attack in Jerusalem is supported by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas," Netanyahu said, in an apparent reference to the praise that the terrorist, Abdel Rahman Al-Shaludi, received Oct. 23 from a Jerusalem branch of Abbas' Fatah organization.

It was the second time since the Oct. 22 terror attack that Netanyahu charged Abbas was supporting or inciting attacks on Jews in the capital.

The first casualty of the deadly attack was a three-month-old American citizen, Chaya Zissel Braun. Several others were injured in the attack.

The driver was shot by police as he attempted to flee the scene and died later in Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center. The driver, Abdel Rahman Al-Shaludi, a Palestinian resident of the eastern Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, was scheduled to be buried Sunday evening, after delays due to Palestinian rioting throughout eastern Jerusalem.

Apparently referring to the attack the same day on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, by a man who had converted to Islam, Netanyahu noted Jerusalem was not the only city or capital to face terror threats, adding that Israel would not allow such attacks to become the norm.

During the security briefing Oct.23, which was attended by Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonvitch, Israel Police Chief Yohanan Danino and Shin Bet head Yoram Cohen, the prime minister said Jerusalem's police force would be massively reinforced to combat the rise in East Jerusalem violence in recent weeks.

"I trust the people sitting here," Netanyahu said at the meeting. "We support the Israeli police. We will give them all the reinforcements they need, all the capabilities, in order to realize this mission" of bringing an end to violent attacks in the city.

Later that day during a ceremony commemorating slain Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi, who was assassinated by a Palestinian terror cell 13 years ago in Jerusalem, Netanyahu linked assaults carried out by Islamist-inspired terrorists around the world to the previous day's attack, and said Israel was determined to eradicate terrorism activity within its border.

Benjamin Netanyahu

"Like other campaigns against terror, we will win here too," Netanyahu said.

"Today's world is learning to recognize this terror, because a lot of the principles of the terror that strikes us are shared by extremist Islamic terrorists who attack other capitals. The difference is that we are not bowing our heads in the face of terror, and we fight it with force, again and again."

Earlier Oct. 23, Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon said the attack in Jerusalem was "clearly the outcome of those in the Palestinian Authority who educate the younger generation to hate Jews and expel them from their homeland."

The Palestinian Authority "does not, and never did, have a culture of peace, but rather a culture of incitement and jihad against Jews. It starts with Abbas' lying statements against Israel from the UN podium, continues with persistent Palestinian attempts to delegitimize us in the international arena, and ends with incitement in the Palestinian education system. These are the harsh consequences," he charged.

"This is why we say time and again that the roots of the conflict are not territorial, but rather the fact that the Palestinians refuse to accept our right to exist as a Jewish state within any borders at all," the defence minister concluded.

Abbas's Fatah movement published a poster celebrating the rail station attacker, calling Shaludi a "heroic martyr" who "executed the Jerusalem operation which led to the running over of settlers in the occupied city of Jerusalem."

Shaludi, a nephew of slain Hamas explosives expert Mohiyedine Sharif, is believed to have been a Hamas supporter, based on the radicalism in his Facebook posts, but the new Fatah poster may indicate an organizational affiliation with the rival Palestinian organization.

The Palestinian Authority issued no official comment on the incident, but Fatah Central Committee member Sultan Abu-Aynayn dubbed Shaludi "a hero" in Facebook comments posted Oct. 23, citing his time spent in Israeli prisons, according to Palestinian *Media Watch*.

Barkat called for a bolstered police presence in neighbourhoods that have seen violent riots in recent months, as stone-throwing protests broke out across East Jerusalem the evening of Oct. 22.

"We must restore peace and security in Jerusalem," Barkat said in a statement. "As I have said for months, the situation in Jerusalem is intolerable and we must act unequivocally against all violence taking place in the city. Today, more than ever, it is clear that we must send police forces into neighbourhoods where there are disturbances, placing them strategically and widely in significant numbers." ■

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OPINION

Can we do it without a scourge?

Sagi Melamed

Many questions – military, political, economic, social, moral – were raised during the last war in Gaza. But the central question addresses the issue of cohesion and unity in Israel.

During the 50 days of Operation Protective Edge, Israelis became aware of feelings, abilities, energies and strengths that many believed had been lost long ago. Support for the soldiers, expressed by donations of money, equipment and food. The love the civilians lavished on Israel Defence Forces soldiers. The caring and volunteerism. The conviction that justice was unquestionably on our side and that this war was necessary. These emotions had not been felt in Israel for decades.

Israelis' goodwill, sense of unity, comradeship and cohesion in the summer of 2014 was comparable to the advice of a marriage counsellor: "Remember when you were in love with each other… Remember what brought you together…" Or in prophet Jeremiah's words: "I remember to you the loving kindness of your youth…"

But will these feelings survive after the war, when the "Code Red" alarm falls silent? That was the big question during the summer of 2014.

In the settlement of Hoshaya, an ad hoc initiative was started during Operation Protective Edge. The initiative was named *BLITZ*. At another time and place, *BLITZ* might have stood for "*Bli Tzionut*" (without Zionism), but the opposite was true: it stood for "*Bli Tzini'ut*" (without cynicism). Within days, *BLITZ* had raised tens of thousands of shekels, and, with help from friends in Israel and abroad, had arranged to support the soldiers of the unit in which one of our neighbours served.

The *BLITZ* WhatsApp messages encapsulate the emotions. Men who would be busy during a normal summer, with family, career, sports and summer vacation, were suddenly talking and writing about "Zionism," "defending the homeland" and "unity of Israel," feelings and words that were always there but had become dusty and tarnished with time.

Initiatives like *BLITZ* sprang up in the hundreds during the war. In different forms, in various scopes, in some unexpected places – such as within the ultra-Orthodox community – but all under the rubric: Unity and Cohesion of the People of Israel in the State of Israel.

Continuing the metaphor of the married couple, Israelis proved to themselves that they "still have it." The special "togetherness" of being an Israeli in Israel is still alive and kicking. And here is the greatest challenge: is it possible to maintain these elusive feelings even without an external enemy? Do we need a scourge to threaten us in order to be united?

This is not a straightforward question. The "scourge" has a historical role in the unity of the People of Israel. The Hebrew word "*tzorer*" ("scourge") is reserved for the worst of the worst, such as Amalek or Hitler. Its root letters are *tzadi-resh-resh*, which are also the root of the word *tzror* (bundle or binding). This shows a close etymological connection between facing a vicious enemy and national cohesion.

In the last couple of years, I have been involved in a number of initiatives that focus on the unity of Israelis. These include: "*Meetchabrim*," which creates a network of organizations and people around the country; the "Israeli Shabbat initiative" of the Beit Hillel organization, which arranges encounters among Israelis around the Shabbat table; and the "Habakkuk Group," which creates connections among people from every part of Israel's varied society. The common denominator is that these are grassroots initiatives led by skillful and charismatic people who decided to take action and work toward Israeli unity and cohesion.

Whenever talk turns to the possibility of peace with our Arab neighbours, someone will always quip, "If we ever have peace with our neighbours, we'll start fighting among ourselves." This is probably not a joke. Even without peace in the offing, Israeli society is facing an enormous challenge: how to maintain unity and cohesion without relying on enemies. The need is clear. The will exists and is growing. The ability? Of course that exists. Can Israel meet the challenge? ■

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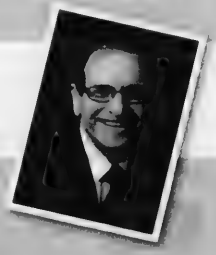
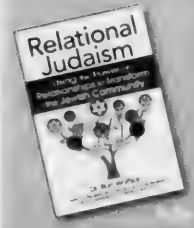


Topic: "Relational Judaism -
The Conservative Synagogue
in the 21st Century"



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GUEST VOICE

Klinghoffer opera an insult to our father's memory

LISA AND ILSA KLINGHOFFER
JTA, NEW YORK

On Oct. 8, 1985, our 69-year-old wheelchair-bound father, Leon Klinghoffer, was shot in the head by Palestinian hijackers on the Achille Lauro cruise ship. The terrorists brutally and unceremoniously threw his body and wheelchair overboard into the Mediterranean. His body washed up on the Syrian shore a few days later.

Beginning on Oct. 20 for eight performances, a baritone portraying "Leon Klinghoffer" will appear on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera and sing the "Aria of the Falling Body" as he artfully falls into the sea. Competing choruses will highlight Jewish and Palestinian narratives of suffering and oppression, selectively presenting the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The four terrorists responsible for his murder will be humanized by distinguished opera singers and given a backstory, an "explanation" for their brutal act of terror and violence. Opera-goers will see and hear a musical examination of terrorism, the Holocaust and Palestinian claims of dispossession – all in fewer than three hours.

Since the Metropolitan Opera's decision to stage *The Death of Klinghoffer* by composer John Adams became public several months ago, much has been said and written about our father. Those opposed to the opera's appearance in New York have elevated his murder at the hands of terrorists into a form of martyrdom. To cultural arbiters and music critics, meanwhile, his tragic story has been seen merely as a vehicle for what they perceive to be artistic brilliance.

For us, the impact and message of the opera is much more deeply felt and tragically personal.

Neither Mr. Adams nor librettist Alice Goodman reached out to us when creating the opera, so we didn't know what to expect when we attended the American debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1991. We were devastated by what we saw: the exploitation of the murder of our father as a vehicle for political commentary.

Over the years, we have been deeply distressed with each new production of *Klinghoffer*. Critical views of Israel permeate the opera, and the staging and props of various productions have only amplified that bias. To have it now produced in New York – in our own backyard – by the country's most prestigious opera company is incredibly painful.

We have always been strong supporters of the arts, and believe they can play an important role in examining and understanding significant world events. *Klinghoffer* does no such thing. It presents false moral equivalencies without context and offers no real insight into the historical reality and the senseless murder of an American Jew. The opera rationalizes, romanticizes and legitimizes the terrorist murder of our father.

Long ago we resolved never to let the last few minutes of Leon Klinghoffer's life define who he was as a man, husband and father. Opera patrons will only see Leon Klinghoffer presented as a victim, but he was so much more.

Our father was an inventor who loved to work with his hands. After his stroke, he continued to use his one good arm to repair anything that needed fixing. Every Saturday night he and our mother, Marilyn, would get dressed up and go out dancing. Family and friends meant everything to him.

He was on a cruise with our mother, celebrating their 36th anniversary with a group of lifelong friends who summered together on the Jersey shore, when terrorists took over the ship, announced a hijacking in progress, and separated the Jewish passengers from those on board.

The terrorist thugs who murdered Leon Klinghoffer didn't care about the good, sweet man our father was. To them he was just a Jew – an American in a wheelchair whose life they considered worthless.

As the years have passed, we have tried to ensure that his murder would not be forgotten or, worse, co-opted or exploited by those with an agenda. We believe his ordeal should continue to serve as a wake-up call to civilized society about the dangers of terrorism. We have dedicated our lives since the tragedy to educating people about the danger of terrorism, and putting a personal face on victims and their families through the Leon and Marilyn Klinghoffer Memorial Foundation of the Anti-Defamation League.

Our father was one of the first American victims of Middle Eastern terrorism. Today, with the memory of 9/11, the reality of Al Qaeda and Islamic State, and countless other attacks and threats, Americans live under the deadly threat of terrorism each and every day.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

GUEST VOICE

Opera justifies terrorism

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Terrorism is irrational. It should never be explained away or justified. Nor should the death of innocent civilians be misunderstood as an acceptable means for drawing attention to perceived political grievances. Unfortunately, *The Death of Klinghoffer* does all of this and sullies the memory of our father in the process. ■

Lisa and Ilsa Klinghoffer of New York City are co-founders of the Leon and Marilyn Klinghoffer Memorial Foundation of the Anti-Defamation League, which they established with their late mother, Marilyn, in 1985, to raise awareness about the evils of terrorism.

Rabbi now suspended from duties at Towson U

JTA
WASHINGTON

Rabbi Barry Freundel

Tiny cameras and memory cards capable of holding hundreds of thousands of images were found in the Towson University office of Rabbi Barry Freundel.

The devices, memory cards and flash drives, as well as a photo of naked women and a handwritten list of names, were found in the rabbi's office on the campus near Baltimore during a police search, the *Washington Post* reported last Friday

Rabbi Freundel, a prominent Orthodox leader and rabbi at Washington's Kesher Israel synagogue, was arrested on Oct. 14 for allegedly installing a clock radio with a hidden camera in the shower room of the synagogue's mikvah. He is believed to have secretly filmed women showering and undressing before their immersions, which is part of the conversion ritual and which married Orthodox women perform each month following menstruation.

Rabbi Freundel pleaded not guilty to voyeurism in a D.C. court on Oct. 15. He is charged with six misdemeanour counts of voyeurism. Kesher Israel has suspended the rabbi without pay, as has the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America.

Rabbi Freundel has been a tenured associate professor at Towson since 2009. The school also has suspended and barred him from campus.

The affidavit for the search warrant filed in Baltimore County District Court and obtained by the Washington Post says that "several young female students" toured the Orthodox synagogue Kesher Israel at Freundel's invitation, with "some even participating in the bathing ritual."

Some students have told the Towson student newspaper the *Towerlight* that several female students who toured the synagogue used the mikvah at Rabbi Freundel's suggestion, as an educational experience. It is not known if any of the students were filmed.

"Dr. Freundel has been suspended from any and all faculty duties and responsibilities, pending the outcome of that investigation and associated criminal proceedings. At this time, there is no indication that these activities occurred on the Towson University campus. We are concerned about the serious nature of this matter, and we are providing support and counselling resources to members of the campus community," Towson director of communications Ray Feldmann said in a statement. ■

JPL 100

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Shulamis Yelin French Literature Award on a Jewish Theme
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Gerald Tulchinsky
"Joe Salsberg: A Life of Commitment"

Azrieli Institute Award for Best Book in Israel Studies in English or French
Anita Shapira
"Israel: A History"

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Käthe Roth
"The First Jews in North America" by Denis Vageois

Michael Moskovitz Award for a Film on a Jewish Theme
Vladimir Kabelik
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The J.I. Segal Awards of the JPL were established in 1968 to honour and perpetuate the memory of the great Canadian Yiddish poet J.I. Segal (1896-1954) with awards to encourage and reward works on Jewish themes and to recognize contributions to Jewish education.

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No reason for Denmark to ban circumcision: minister

JTA
COPENHAGEN

Denmark's national health authority does not think non-medical circumcision is risky enough to justify a ban on it, the body's director said in parliament.

The Danish Health and Medicines Authority's director-general, Else Smith, made the statement during her address at a debate in the Danish parliament last week.

Two Danish parties and the country's children's ombudsman support a ban because they believe circumcision violates children's rights.

The *Politiken* daily quoted Smith as saying that while there is insufficient evidence to justify recommending the practice, the risks aren't serious enough to require a ban.

The debate was organized by the Danish parliament's group on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Support for a ban was reiterated during the debate by the Red-Green Alliance and the Liberal Alliance, whose combined electoral weight is 11 per cent of the Danish parliament's 179 seats.

Ole Birk Olesen, a lawmaker for Liberal Alliance, responded to Smith's assertion by comparing circumcision with finger amputation and genital mutilation.

"Doctors can also remove small children's small fingers without risk if they do it correctly. Should it be allowed to amputate young children's little fingers without a medical reason?" he demanded.

The debate in parliament comes amid a discussion across northern Europe on the Jewish and Muslim practice. Interest in the topic resurged in 2012, with left-leaning liberals and secularists calling for a ban for humanitarian reasons and nationalist anti-immigration parties supporting a prohibition because they feel the custom is a foreign and barbaric element in Danish society.

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the European Conference of Presidents, who visited Denmark last month, told *JTA* that activists against non-medical circumcision of boys, or brit milah, as it is called in Hebrew, plan to focus their lobbying efforts on Denmark. "The mixture of a secularist society, anti-Israel sentiment, a hostile far right and threats by radical Muslims make life increasingly difficult for Danish Jews," he said.

In a poll released earlier this week, nearly three-quarters of 1,000 Danish respondents said they supported fully or partially banning non-medical circumcision of boys. ■

Women of the Wall smuggle Torah scroll

JTA
JERUSALEM

Women who defied Western Wall Plaza rules last week by bringing a small Torah scroll there were allowed to finish praying.

The decision to allow members of the Women of the Wall feminist group to continue their prayer was made to prevent desecration of the scroll even though their actions were in breach of the rules, according to a statement last Friday by the office of Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, who runs the Western Wall, or Kotel, one of Judaism's holiest sites.

"A small group of women carried out a deception this morning by bringing in a small Torah scroll into the women's section after they had been prevented from bringing in a large one," read the statement. "In the future, efforts will be made to prevent such events from recurring, as it is forbidden for anyone, man or woman, to bring a Torah scroll into the plaza."

According to Israel Radio, 150 women participated in the prayer with a small Torah scroll, which they concealed prior to entering the women's section. The Torah scroll is 200 years old and was brought especially from Britain for the prayer, the report said.

Women of the Wall gathers at the Western Wall at the start of each Jewish month. The group's members have clashed frequently with staff from Rabbi Rabinovitch's office and with police for holding services that violate the rules enforced by that office, including singing, wearing prayer shawls and other customs that are forbidden to women under the office's interpretation of Orthodox Jewish law. ■

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Expansion of hotel industry injects new life into economy

STEVE K. WALZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, TEL AVIV

Trying to shake off the disheartening fiscal and physical headaches in the aftermath of Operation: Protective Edge, Tel Aviv's ambitious hotel owners are pressing ahead with a variety of impressive projects to attract foreign tourists ahead of the forthcoming winter vacation period, as well as the lucrative Passover Spring 2015 season.

Eli Ziv, director general of the Tel Aviv Hotel Association (which also encompasses Herzliya, Ramat Gan and Bat Yam), claimed that rejuvenating the local hotel industry is vital to Israel's tourism economy.

"Tel Aviv leads the country in terms of incoming tourism, growth in the number of hotels being built, as well as the expansion of attractions and upgrading of the tourism infrastructure," Ziv revealed. "In the last 10 years, the number of overnight stays by foreign tourists at local hotels has grown by 104 per cent. In 2013 alone, there were over three million overnight stays by visitors from abroad, which accounted for 33 per cent of all incoming tourism's overnight stays in Israel. Jerusalem also reached 33 per cent as well. But we believe that with the number of projects the city has in development, the number of overnight stays will most probably grow to four million by 2017."

Aerial illustration of the new W Hotel project in Jaffa.

The one major advantage that Tel Aviv has over Jerusalem is its "sea and sun" factor, which provides a huge attraction for both the "frozen chosen" (Jews who live in colder climates like Canada and the United Kingdom), and non-Jewish European tourists who wish to defrost and imbibe the Mediterranean sunshine that the city has to offer.

"We have 14 kilometres (8.5 miles) of beaches that stretch from Jaffa to Herzliya and an expanding beachfront promenade where bicycling enthusiasts can enjoy the views, and exercise. That's a major ingredient for us to market Tel Aviv as a prime destination to tourists," Ziv said.

In order to accommodate the growing numbers of potential tourists, the city of Tel Aviv, in league with the hotel business community, is in the midst of a fast-paced expansion plan that has already seen the addition of 900 new hotel rooms during the past year. In 2013, the chic Ritz Carlton Herzliya and Isrotel Royal Beach, as well as the boutique Indigo Ramat Gan and Rothschild Hotels made very successful debuts. The glitzy Norman Hotel, which is located in an immaculately restored edifice and caters to high end business travellers and vacationers, recently opened its doors for business a few months ago, alongside several other boutique facilities.

In 2015, the posh W Hotel in Jaffa (via the internationally renowned Starwood chain), Fattal Hotel's Herzliya Marina, and new boutique hotels from the Tel Aviv-based Atlas Hotel chain will also have their grand openings.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Tel Aviv investing in and upgrading tourism infrastructure

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

By 2016, the metro Tel Aviv region will also celebrate the opening of two more upscale facilities, the Kempinski Tel Aviv (the European chain's first hotel management venture in Israel) and the Pasha Jaffa, which is being built by the Orchid Hotel Management, and owned by Jordache Enterprises (New York.)

"Our vision is to double the amount of rooms in Tel Aviv to 13,000 by 2020," said Ziv.

"Parallel to these ongoing hotel expansions, the city is investing in upgrading and expanding the tourism infrastructure by extending the beachfront promenade all the way to Herzliya. In addition, the city is revamping its main convention centres in order to attract more business and cultural events from abroad, and is constantly upgrading its museums and theatres.

"We also believe that Tel Aviv should be a major international sports venue and host headline-making events ranging from soccer to yachting. High profile sporting events will also attract many tourists from Europe and beyond to our city. If we have peace and quiet here, there's no reason why Tel Aviv can't attract a nice portion of the 250 million tourists who regularly visit Mediterranean countries in the region."

Inbal Jerusalem Hotel new family suite

The city of Jerusalem, the largest metro region in the country and home to its own set of popular cultural and historical attractions is also in the midst of a hotel boom. During the past year, the magnificent Waldorf Astoria Hotel (Hilton chain) created a new standard of luxury accommodations within the Israeli hotel industry. In addition, several other well known hotels led by the Inbal Jerusalem put the finishing touches on major interior and exterior renovations designed to increase its attraction to business executives, organizations and frequent international travellers.

By 2015, Orchid Hotel Management will debut a new hotel in the heart of the Ben-Yehuda Street downtown pedestrian mall district, while the Isrotel chain puts the finishing touches on their new luxury facility in the bustling German Colony neighbourhood. ■

Tel Aviv-Jaffa beachfront

Jewish Life

Holocaust survivor's tapestries on exhibit at Temple Sinai

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Unlike many children of Holocaust survivors, Bernice Steinhardt, 67, and her sister were never sheltered from the horrors their mother, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, experienced as a teenager during the war.

The sisters grew up in Brooklyn, hearing vivid accounts of their mother's struggle to survive, as well as happy tales of her childhood in Poland.

These stories, told through a series of photographs of Krinitz's hand-crafted, richly woven tapestries, will be showcased in an exhibit called *Fabric of Survival* at Toronto's Temple Sinai Congregation from Oct. 29 to Nov. 23.

The exhibit marks both Holocaust Education Week and the synagogue's 60th anniversary.

Krinitz, who died in 2001, had a unique survival story: the Nazis occupied Mniszek, her small Polish village, in 1939. In 1942, they ordered all the Jews to report to a train station in a nearby town.

The night before leaving, Krinitz begged her parents to think of a non-Jewish friend who could take her in. Her father had been a horse trader and had made a number of Polish friends during his travels. They agreed that she and one of her sisters should go to a friend of his in a nearby village, and the girls set off, never to see their parents or three other siblings again.

The man whose home they ran to only took them in for a few days, fearful the Nazis would kill them all.

Realizing she and her sister had no hope of surviving as Jews, Krinitz concocted false Polish, Catholic identities for them and they eventually found a village to work in.

In 1944, when the Soviets began pushing the Germans out of Poland, Krinitz, then 17, joined the Polish army and went to fight in Berlin. After the war, she went back to Poland to find her sister, and the two ended up in a displaced persons camp, where both met their future husbands. They eventually immigrated to New York.

Amazingly, Krinitz only began creating art in later life.

At age 50, she decided she wanted her daughters to see what her childhood home and her family members had looked like.

She had never drawn in her life, but could "sew anything," Steinhardt said, having worked as an apprentice to a dressmaker as a young girl.

"She took a large piece of fabric and sketched onto it an image of her family's house and their neighbour's house, and started filling it in with stiches," Steinhardt recalled. "It was quite beautiful, and she was really satisfied with it. It looked her to like what she saw in her mind's eye."

Krinitz gave this first tapestry to Steinhardt and made a companion piece for her other daughter, Helene McQuade.

It wasn't until 10 years later that Krinitz felt inspired to create more, eventually sewing close to 40 elaborate panels depicting poignant scenes of village life before the war, the Nazis' invasion of her town and expulsion of the Jews, the terror of being on the run, brushes with death, and her eventual liberation and escape to America.

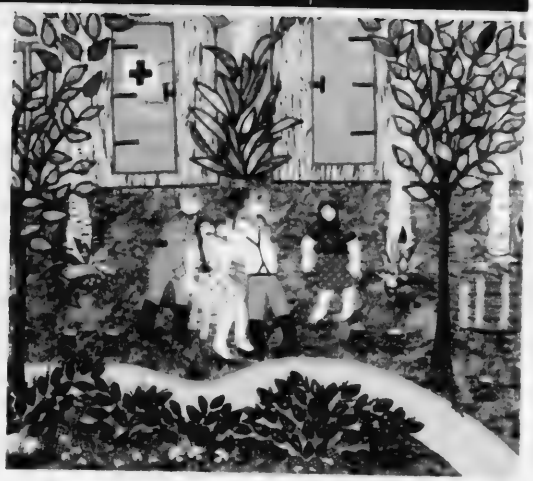
For years, Steinhardt, who lived close to her mother, lovingly hung each tapestry on her wall, but she eventually "ran out of wall space," and decided the artwork deserved a greater audience.

A year after Krinitz died, Steinhardt and McQuade founded Art and Remembrance, an art and educational non-profit based in Maryland, to share their mother's creations and story of survival, and to use the panels as an educational tool.

For more than a decade, they've toured Krinitz's tapestries, either the originals or large-scale photographs of them, in museums across the United States, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

The exhibit makes its Canadian debut at Temple Sinai, and will be accompanied by the screening of a documentary, *Through the Eye of the Needle*, which Steinhardt and her sister made about their mother. Steinhardt will speak at Temple Sinai on Nov. 9.

"We realized this [exhibit] was a very powerful way to bring the lessons of the Holocaust into the modern world, to convey them to the generations that are still learning them," Steinhardt explained. "Because [the tapestries] feature the story of a young girl, they bring the war and the experience of the Holocaust to a very intimate level, and have the extraordinary power to inform and to move."■



A series of photographs of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz's hand-crafted, richly woven tapestries, will be showcased in an exhibit *Fabric of Survival* at Toronto's Temple Sinai Congregation from Oct. 29 to Nov. 23

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 30, 2014

Something for everyone at Jewish Book Festival

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In November 2013, the Jewish community centres (JCCs) of Greater Toronto hosted a Jewish Book Festival with only three authors, a production so small it was easy not to notice.

But the JCCs' second annual Jewish Book Festival, which unfolds at both the Schwartz/Reisman Centre and the Prosserman JCC from Nov. 9 to 16, features a much-expanded roster that will likely generate a lot more attention and community involvement.

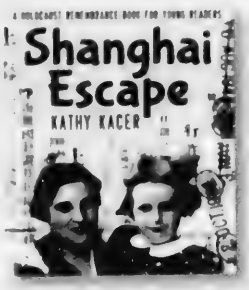
The diverse program spotlights 16 mostly American authors and their newly published books, with themes ranging from parenting to sporting events, health to the Holocaust, interfaith issues to Israel. Although the festival apparently lacks a strong headlining author, it is anchored by a large book and gift sale.

In terms of thematic intensity, the books run the gamut from a seemingly placid cookbook about food preserving – *Mrs. Wheelbarrow's Practical Pantry*, by Cathy Barrow – to an edgy, or at least cutting-edge, memoir, *Blood, Marriage, Wine & Glitter*, by Toronto-based S. Bear Bergman, about his experience as one of two transgender fathers of a young son.

"We like to attract different audiences and we have to make sure that every segment of our population has something to choose from," says Gustavo Rymberg, programming director of the Schwartz/Reisman Centre.

Although it comes immediately on the heels of Holocaust Education Week, the festival is also hosting several Holocaust-themed events including readings from the non-fiction book *A Replacement Life* by Borish Fishman and the novels *Shanghai Escape* by Toronto author Kathy Kacer, *The Sweetness* by Sande Boritz Berger, and *Jacob's Oath* by Martin Fletcher.

Eager to involve young families, the festival has scheduled several talks on parenting just when parents will be dropping off their children for Sunday morning Hebrew school at both JCCs. Titles include Ruth Feldman's *The Green Bubbie*, a book about grandparenting; and Amy S. F. Lutz's *Each Day I Like It Better*, a book about how to care for children with autism. Carla Naumburg's *Parenting in the Present Moment* and Logan Levkoff's *Got Teens?*



Other featured titles are John Rosengren's *The Fight of Their Lives*, about the ugly Marichal-Roseboro baseball brawl of 1965; David Kalis's *Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser*, a memoir about his experience seeking his family's past in the Soviet Union; Seth Fishman's young adult tale *The Well's End*; Yael Ben-Zion's *Intermarried*; Lynn Davidman's *Becoming Un-Orthodox*; and Richard Cohen's *Israel, Is It Good for the Jews?*

The roughly 350 JCCs across North America have collectively proclaimed November as Jewish Book Month, and many hold book festivals during the month. JCC programmers chose from more than 300 books and authors that were showcased during a three-day conference in New York in May.

Ironically, the now-defunct Toronto Jewish Book Fair was a fixture of the city's November calendar until several years ago, when the Koffler Centre for the Arts amalgamated it with the Canadian Jewish Book Awards into the Toronto Jewish Literary Festival and moved it to the spring.

But nature and the Jewish communal calendar apparently both abhor a vacuum, so a large November book festival is back on the roster once again.

"We're not competing with them, we are very different," Rymberg asserts, referring to the springtime Toronto Jewish Literary Festival and the eight-day autumnal festival that he has programmed.

The Schwartz/Reisman Centre is in the Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. in Vaughan. The Prosserman JCC is in the Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St. in North York. Tickets to the readings are $5 each. For details or to purchase tickets, please visit srcentre.ca or prossermanjcc.com, or phone 905-303-1821, ext. 3006. ■

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ROM exhibits explore theme of collaboration

Bernice Eisenstein, left,and a collaged and folded edition of Felix Salten's *Bambi: A Life in the Woods*, one of her exhibits in *Genizot*.

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The largest annual event in Toronto's Jewish community calendar, Holocaust Education Week (HEW), presents more than 100 programs, most of them free, in diverse locations across the city – synagogues, libraries, churches, schools and community centres – from Nov. 2 to 9.

The opening night program (Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum) features Ayelet Waldman, American author of *Love and Treasure*, a work of historical fiction about the "Hungarian Gold Train." That was a train the Americans intercepted in Austria in 1945, finding it loaded with gold watches, silver candlesticks, rings, tapestries, furs and other loot the Nazis and their Hungarian collaborators had stolen from Hungary's Jews.

The ROM is simultaneously hosting *Genizot*, an exhibition of new work by HEW artist-in-residence Bernice Eisenstein. Contained in an intimate niche in the ROM's Samuel European Galleries, the exhibition features 10 paintings and a cabinet full of found and made objects that explore the themes of memory, preservation and distillation of experience and meaning. The pieces also explore the theme of collaboration, which is HEW's unifying theme this season.

"It's wonderfully ironic that there are two meanings of 'collaboration,'" said Eisenstein. "One is to work with a person jointly to achieve something together; the other is to give aid and assistance to an enemy."

Both types of collaboration are amply explored in multiple programs throughout the week involving both local and visiting presenters. "We've been fortunate to have a stellar group of international speakers coming to take part," said Carson Phillips, assistant director of the hosting Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre. Besides lectures, panel discussions and art exhibitions, scheduled events include film screenings, literary programs, musical and stage performances, survivor testimonies and alternate-language programs in Yiddish, Russian and Hebrew.

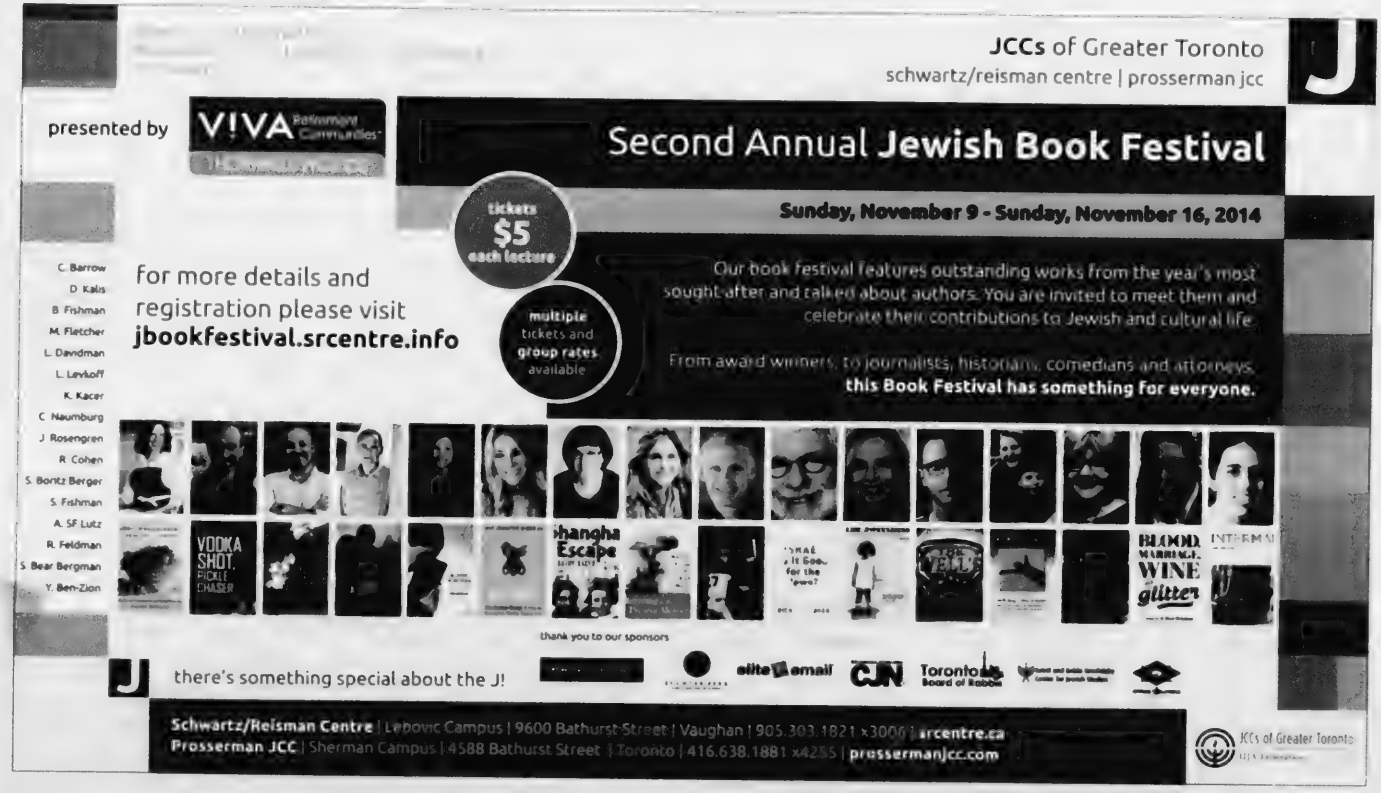
Highlights include discussions with HEW educator-in-residence Martin Hagmayr on "Hartheim and the T4 Program," a euthanasia operation in Austria which resulted in about 30,000 murders; a presentation by author Wendy Lower on her

book *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*; and a performance by the ARC Ensemble of chamber music by "musical collaborator" Jerzy Fitelberg, along with a discussion of related moral issues on individual accountability.

"Kristallnacht Then and Now," the closing program at Beth Tzedec Congregation (Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m.), features a talk by HEW scholar-in-residence Dr. Doris L. Bergen on less familiar aspects of the infamous "night of broken glass," along with a display of Holocaust-era treasures of Jewish life in the synagogue's Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum.

These are only a few examples from HEW's 50-page program, available at select locations around the GTA; it may also be downloaded from the Neuberger Centre's website, www.holocaustcentre.com. While most events are free, registration is required and some events require paid tickets.

In terms of participants, HEW 2014 – the 34th annual event since the tradition was founded circa 1980 – may even surpass last year's collective attendance figures of about 35,000. "We've been on an incline for the last five years," said Phillips, who cites the generous involvement of a robust group of benefactors, partners, volunteers and community organizations behind HEW's continued growth. ■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Theatre producer debuts award-winning production

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Sara Schwartz Geller JON COHEN PHOTO

Following critical acclaim in Norway, New York City and San Francisco, award-winning *Fabrik: The Legend of M. Rabinowitz*, will make its Canadian debut in Toronto.

Created by Wakka Wakka Productions, *Fabrik* opens Nov. 5 and runs though Nov. 16 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

With three professional puppeteers in multiple roles, *Fabrik* is based on the true story of a Jewish family in Norway in the years leading up to the Holocaust.

The story is told through the work of masterful and unique puppet artistry and musical numbers such as the *The Only Jew In Town*, that will transport audiences through a delightful and haunting theatrical experience.

Norway may not be the first place one would think of as the setting for a Holocaust drama, but that's where Moritz Rabinowitz, a Polish Jew who immigrated to Norway, built and owned a large clothing factory and store in his town.

Originally from the small town of Rajgrod in Poland, he was sent by his parents to Norway in 1901 to escape pogroms and persecution. In Haugesund, a small fishing village on the west coast of Norway, he discovered a land rich with opportunity.

Fabrik chronicles Rabinowitz's life in Norway in the 1930s and '40s from his rise as an entrepreneur to his private life as a family man, and his courageous moments as an outspoken denouncer of anti-Semitism.

Featured during Holocaust Education Week, *Fabrik* is produced by Sara Schwartz Geller Productions, in association with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.

As one of the only independent female theatre producers in North America specializing in Jewish content, Sara Schwartz Geller is thrilled to be back in her hometown, Toronto.

She has been producing shows from as early as age four.

"I started directing my cousins, sister and brother in my own little productions around the house, taking what's inside our heads and using it to get people outside of their heads. I have had this fascination since I was a little kid," Schwartz Geller said.

She attended an arts-focused high school to study theatre, and then continued directing, producing and choreographing shows while studying journalism at Carleton University.

She worked at Canada's National Arts Centre in an administrative capacity, and found herself drawn out of the office and into the theatre.

"I saw every theatre production at the National Arts Centre over six years. I realized my passion was really inside the theatre," said Schwartz Geller.

Moving to San Francisco, Schwartz Geller worked for 10 years in several capacities, including that of executive director, with The Jewish Theatre San Francisco, formerly called A Travelling Jewish Theatre. "Dybbuks, puppets, soul music, relationships, prayer, psalms, hip hop, Israel, love, hate, drama, laughter, depth. Oh, what a journey it was!" Schwartz reflected.

The theatre, at one point the largest and most prolific professional Jewish theatre company in North America, she said, recently closed.

Schwartz Geller moved back to Toronto and decided to start her own independent theatre production company.

"What I am doing are performances that have a different esthetic, that are a little bit more experimental in form and content, not necessarily traditional fare.

"The next three pieces I have chosen all have Jewish content ranging from hip hop to puppetry to children's theatre," Schwartz Geller said.

Having produced *Fabrik* twice before with great success and audience response, Schwartz Geller told *The CJN*, "I always felt like it wasn't possible to get lost in a show the way you can get lost in puppetry. There is something very disarming about it. As a producer, one thing that I really look for is how powerful the piece is.

"You can do many things with puppets that you can't do with people. Puppets are sweet and vulnerable, and that is why we are able to go to really dark places with them. They take you somewhere completely different and surprise you," said Gabrielle Brechner, one of the three producers of Wakka Wakka Productions.

"This is a tremendous piece of theatre. To be able to use it as a vehicle and tell a story about the Holocaust is very rewarding," Brechner added.

"I like watching the same face twice. I observe when somebody first walks into the theatre and then again on the way out. That's how I know I've done my job: when I see two very different faces."

"That is definitely what you see after watching *Fabrik*," said Schwartz Geller. ■

Tickets can be purchased through www.ticketmaster.com. Visit www.saraschwartzgeller.com.

The kindness of strangers

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Thank God, most of us born in Canada after the middle of the last century will never be tested the way the generation of our parents and grandparents were tested. During World War II, to be Jewish in most of Europe, was to be preyed upon and hunted down like a pitiable, doomed fox by a frenzied pack of braying hounds.

Fear was the European Jew's constant companion. Bravery and courage were seldom guarantors of survival. Sometimes it was sheer, dumb luck that led the way to survival for yet another day.

And sometimes it was the extraordinary kindness and compassion of strangers, those truly selfless and brave individuals who risked their own lives and the lives of their loved ones to protect and shelter the men, women and children whom Nazi ideology had turned into human quarry.

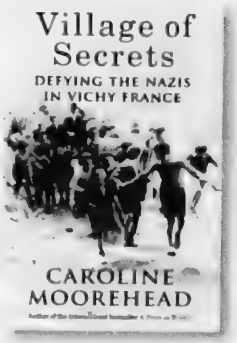
Caroline Moorehead, an award-winning writer, has written a deeply compelling book about the astonishingly courageous behaviour of the men and women in the 22 villages, hamlets and isolated farm houses on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, a high mountainous region in the south-eastern part of France.

"[M]ore people, proportionately, were saved [on the plateau] than anywhere else in France. Saving was what the local people did, silently, acting together, working things out, planning, sharing the burden," she writes.

According to Moorehead, some 800 individuals were saved, "though perhaps 3,000 more may have passed through, helped along their way to safety."

The high plateau – "remote, inaccessible and defiantly independent" – was "the ancient stronghold of persecuted Huguenots." As a result, Moorehead writes, its residents were imbued with the notion of resistance to oppression as a theologically moral imperative. She describes this moral imperative with exquisite clarity. Indeed, the honest, no-holds-barred lucidity of her writing is one of the key elevating strengths of the work.

Moorehead insightfully depicts the political, cultural, emotional and military climate of France during the war years and provides an instructive, introductory historic context for the attitudes and behaviours of the men and women of the plateau.



Village of Secrets: Defying the Nazis in Vichy France
Caroline Moorehead
Random House Canada

She undertook the considerable research and literary effort of following the destinies of some 50 individuals, whose lives and actions are instrumental in conveying the full profundity of what transpired in France during the war. And she is fearless in expressing her observations and in formulating her conclusions.

For example, Moorehead is blunt about the crimes of Vichy France. "It would be many years before it was acknowledged that, from the very beginning, with their censuses, their revisions of nationality, their Statut des Juifs, their seizure of property and businesses and their expulsions from professions and jobs, Vichy had effectively paved the way for Hitler's Final Solution in France. By turning Jews into inferior beings, by interning them in camps, where they starved and grew sick and died, by letting loose on them anti-Semitic zealots… they had make it far easier for the Germans to do their work. The Nazis could have done little of this on their own….No other European country had taken such a clear anti-Semitic line."

The Nazis waged two wars simultaneously: one against the armies of the Allies and the other, against the Jews of Europe. We sometimes block our minds from remembering how relentless and merciless, how cruel, sadistic and brutal was their war against any and every Jew, whether infant or child, old or infirm, man or woman. Even when the Nazis knew the war against the Allies was lost, they did not abate their efforts against the Jews. Indeed they become even more feverishly demonic in their zeal to kill and steal from the Jews.

Moorehead notes that in November 1943, "the Germans decided to take overall control and a concerted drive, meticulous and efficient, had been launched to find and deport France's remaining Jews in a race against the clock and the arrival of the Allies, now recognized to lie not far ahead. In recent months they [the Germans] had become skilled at distinguishing forged documents from real ones. Helped by the Milice (the French militia in Vichy comprised of thugs and far-right nationalists), the Gestapo redoubled their efforts at identifying schools, convents and families in which children were held, raiding prisons, labour camps and farms for adults. Ever more generous rewards were offered to informers." There was simply no satiating the Nazi's craving for genocide.

Moorehead tells us: "Of the 150,000 people who had been deported from France, 75,721 of them were Jews. While a little less than half of the political deportees came home – 40,760 out of 86,827 – only 2,564 Jews did so. More than 10,000 Jewish children under 18 had been put on to trains for the death camps: 300 survived."

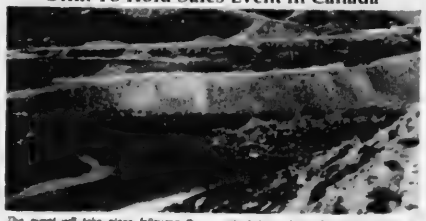
She movingly recreates the suffocating, frightening atmosphere that enveloped the men and women who lived through those dark times in nearly every outing, during casual conversation in a coffee house or in a simple transaction with a stranger.

Three quarters of the 330,000 Jews who lived in France in 1940 did survive the war, Moorehead reminds us. "This was due to many things: the existence of an unoccupied zone until late in 1943, the presence in France of such a small occupying force, but it was chiefly because of the behaviour of a number of ordinary French people; and of this, the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon was a remarkable example."

Moorehead wrote *Village of Secrets* to establish an accurate record of the daring goodness of the people of the Plateau and of others outside the plateau, who were involved in sheltering and saving their fellow human beings. The moral rectitude of these people sparkles with hopeful, inspiring light, which, perhaps, can shine an encouraging glow into the dark spaces of our own moral hesitation.

Village of Secrets reminds us of the possibility of achieving good despite horrific circumstances. It is an important literary achievement. ■

Ramat Givat Zeev – Most Sought After Neighborhood Among Olim To Hold Sales Event in Canada



The event will take place following the organization of a group of buyers from Toronto who are seeking to purchase dozens of units.

Nofei Israel will be holding its first real estate sales event in Canada at which its flagship Ramat Givat Zeev project will be exhibited. The event is coming to Canada following heightened interest from Canadian communities for the most talked about project for olim in Israel. **It will take place on November 9, 2014.**

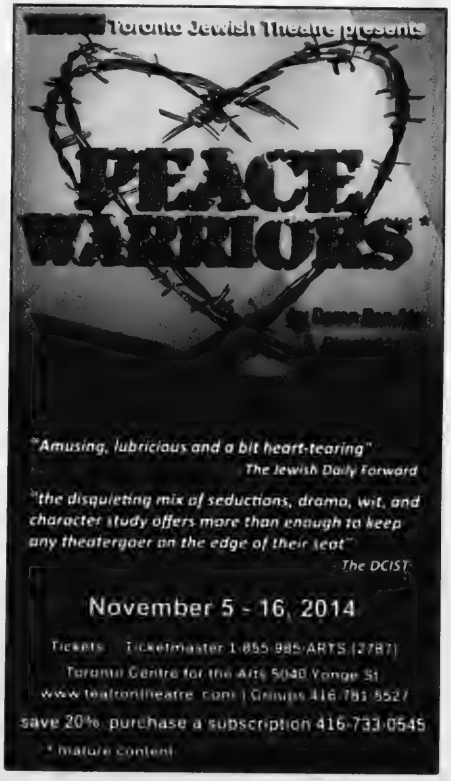
In recent months a large group of buyers from Toronto have gotten together to execute an organized purchase of dozens of housing units in Ramat Givat Zeev. As a result, the developers have decided to send the marketing team to Canada in order to make it easier for the buyers and for many others who have expressed interest. The Canadian communities join many families from American communities who have already decided to make the neighborhood their new home.

At the event, potential buyers will be able to meet professional marketing personnel and to hear details about the neighborhoods many advantages. Ramat Givat Zeev has become the hottest name as a potential new home for those seeking to make aliyah.

Nofei Israel is the largest real estate marketing company in the Orthodox community. It has constructed thousands of housing units and is considered a leading builder of large neighborhoods for specific populations. The important record has helped the developers establish this neighborhood while making sure to meet all the needs of the buyers—to the finest detail.

Ramat Givat Zeev has become known as a unique neighborhood being built for olim. The developers have gone to great lengths to provide exclusive advantages for optimal acclimation to the new homes with an emphasis on building a warm, homogenous community that includes a plethora of excellent educational institutions that suit the mentality of the residents.

Ramat Givat Zeev offers a luxury residential setting that includes rich technical specifications, verdant parks and shopping centers. Likewise it is located just north of Jerusalem and combines a tranquil suburban setting with breathtaking views of the Jerusalem Hills while benefiting from the short distance to all the central parts of the capital city.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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

24 Days

BRUTAL HALIMI KIDNAPPING IS FOCUS OF FRENCH FILM, *24 DAYS*

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea & A Movie series continues with two showings of the gripping thriller, *24 Days*, directed by **Alexandre Arcady,** which tells the true story of the kidnapping of the young French Jew, **Ilan Halimi** in Paris in 2006.

Based on the book by Ilan's mother **Ruth**, Arcady's film follows the police as they try to keep one step ahead of the kidnappers, and compassionately presents a family under immense pressure of possibly losing their son. The cast includes **Pascal Elbé, Zabou Breitman, Jacques Gamblin** and **Sylvie Testud**.

24 Days is part of France's renewed interest in the Halimi affair. Halimi was kidnapped by the Gang of Barbarians, led by **Youssouf Fofana**, a professed anti-Semite who held Halimi in a cellar for 24 days. Due to Halimi being Jewish, Fofana was convinced that he was wealthy and that a huge ransom would follow. *24 Days* won the prestigious Lia Award at the Jerusalem International Film Festival. "[T]his suspenseful drama manages to avoid clichés and intricately presents the experience of anti-Jewish violence in France," read a statement from the award jury.

Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Sunday Nov. 16, 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. Tickets $15. www.tjff.com, 416-324-9121.

• • •

New Teatron Production: *Peace Warriors*, a "sexy comedy about academics and Middle East politics," is the latest offering of Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre. **Doron Ben Atar's** play features four characters, played by **Jerome Bourgault, Becky Grimman, Dawn Sadler** and **Nicole Marie Mccafferty**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St., Nov. 5 to 16. Tickets $26 to $48. www.teatrontheatre.com

• • •

Wartime Evacuation of London: Kitty Wintrob talks about her experiences being evacuated as a girl from her London home to the British countryside at the start of World War II, 75 years ago. The recently published second edition of her book, *I'm Not Going Back: Wartime Memoir of a Child Evacuee*, features a new epilogue about the Nazi blitzkrieg of London and the victory celebration on VE-Day. Barbara Frum Library, 20 Covington Rd., Nov. 11, 7 p.m. Admission free, everyone welcome.

• • •

Film Society Documentary: Toronto Jewish Film Society presents the documentary *As Seen Through These Eyes*, about a group of people who fought the Nazis with the only weapons they had: charcoal, pencil stubs, shreds of paper and memories. Narrated by **Maya Angelou**; with guest speaker **Hilary Helstein**, filmmaker from Los Angeles. $15, $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Nov. 9, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Presented by Toronto South African Film Festival, "Oscar Winner," is an evening with comedian with **Nik Rabinowitz** who focuses on the reality-TV series *South Africa*. $45; $75 with reception. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday Oct. 30, 7 p.m www.algreentheatre.ca

• *Kevin Courrier Spins the Beatles* in his continuing series on the Fab Four. Topic is "Love Me Do, First Hits." Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Nov. 3, 7 p.m. $12, students $6 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• *Stand By Me, The Music of the Brill Building*, starring **Micah Barnes, Billy Newton-Davis, Tyrone Gabriel and Gavin Hope**. $50. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday Nov. 13, 8 p.m. Tickets, 416-978-8849, www.uofttix.ca

• • •

Out of Town

Tafillalt, an Israeli ensemble of composers and performances, makes its Canadian debut in Ottawa this week. Tafillalt presents deeply personal interpretations of traditional and modern Jewish material as well as their own original musical and literary compositions. Carleton University River Building Auditorium, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m. limmudottawa.ca ■

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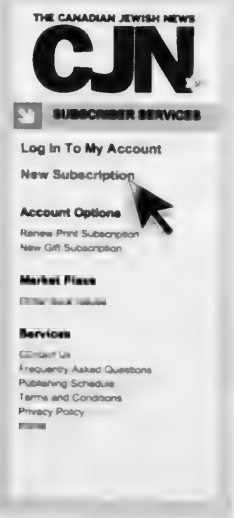


Sextet makes its world premiere at Tarragon

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Laura Condlln is one of the six actors starring in Tarragon Theatre's *Sextet*, a comedy-drama about six sexually entangled musicians during an ill-fated winter tour.

Written and directed by Morris Panych, the play which premieres on Nov. 12 "is every possible incarnation of that word, sextet. We are a chamber ensemble – two cellists, two violas and two violin players," says the Toronto-born award-winning actor.

On a winter tour, the troupe gets stuck in a "crappy motel in a small town.

"We are trapped not only by our own complicated lives, temperaments and desires for each other, but also by Mother Nature herself because there is a blizzard coming. As the play unfolds you meet us and all our layered complexities and quirks as we try to navigate through each other and how we are going to survive the next 48 hours," Conlln says.

"I think if you connect the dots between all of us, everybody wants to be a companion with somebody else, but not the actual person who wants them. Desire rules in that we constantly as humans want what we can't have and that is really explored in this play through human relationships and physical and emotional desire."

Laura Condlln

Condlln plays Sylvia, a cellist. "There are lots of musical metaphors woven through the play. Morris is really good at that, he plays his language in such a brilliant way. Often characters will say one thing, but it has many different meanings, he feels music can be a way of releasing."

Sylvia is absolutely in love with her best friend and fellow cellist, Harry, played by Damien Atkins, who is gay. She ponders finding another man in the ensemble to satisfy her physically, while she secretly has emotional fulfillment with Harry.

Although Condlln plays the violin and viola, she doesn't play the cello. The instrument is present on the stage, though she doesn't have to play it. Having spent years alongside cellists in orchestras she's played with, and meeting with a professional cello player for this performance, she feels confident that she can authentically replicate the actions of a cellist.

"Sylvia is very hungry for physical contact," she explains. "I think it is very interesting that she is a cello player because the cello is so large and it has a definite physical representation that you hold between your legs and you can caress it. It does feel like there is a presence with you."

Condlln hopes audiences will have a good time and laugh, yet feel that their stories are represented and relate to the characters. Acting alongside Condlln and Atkins, are Matthew Edison, Rebecca Northan, Bruce Dow and Jordan Pettle.

"Not only is Morris very funny in his writing, but I think this collection of actors are a very witty and intelligent bunch," Conlln says. "Our world can be a very dark place and I think it is wonderful to spend two hours inside a comedy and invest in those characters' lives."

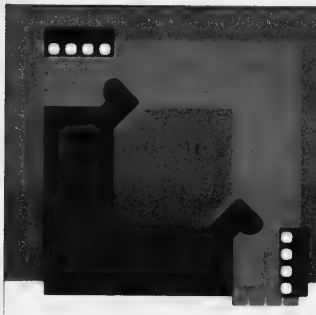
Conlln divides her home life between Stratford, Toronto and Montreal with partner, Jane Gooderham, a professional voice coach and the head of voice at The National Theatre School in Montreal, and their dog, George.

Condlln began acting as a child and later joined the amateur theatre company The York Minstrels.

"When I was growing up in Toronto, I was part of the Secular Jewish Association, my family were secular, humanistic Jews. I sang in the choir and I accompanied the cantor for Kol Nidre on the viola. I feel traditional Jewish folk songs are so evocative. My favourite part of our culture is that musical expression of the ups and downs of our tribe. I feel a connection to that folklore, I meet my religion through that."

Condlln received a Dora nomination for Canadian Stage's *This*. She also spent 11 seasons at the prestigious Stratford Festival where she picked up two awards. ■

Sextet runs Nov. 12 to Dec. 14 at Tarragon Theatre's Mainspace. For tickets call 416-531-1827. www.tarragontheatre.com.



The Irwin Green Forum
Jews and Arabs in Israel:
Investing in a Shared Future

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Monday, November 3, 2014 | 7:30pm (Registration at 7:00pm)
Tamari Family Hall | Lipa Green Centre | 4600 Bathurst Street, Toronto

Join us to hear government and civil society leaders discuss realities, programs and visions for a stronger Israeli future:

Increasing the participation of Arab citizens in Israel's advanced economy is a major government priority today. High rates of poverty and low contribution to GDP result in annual economic losses nationally and persistent social divisions. Arab economic development means closing gaps and tapping into the creative potential of one fifth of Israel's population.

speakers

Aiman Saif
Director-General, Authority for Economic Development of the Minorities Sector in the Prime Minister's Office – on the unprecedented level of government investment in infrastructure and employment.

Ifat Baron
CEO, IT Works – on civil society efforts to close economic gaps by expanding the booming high-tech industry into Israel's Arab society.

Safa Garb
Director, Arab Society and Infrastructure, Joint Distribution Committee – on removing barriers to employment for Arab citizens and establishing career centres throughout the country.

registration

Tanya Levy
416 631-5817
tlevy@ujafed.org

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The bark mitzvah tea party

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My family and friends were surprised to find this unusual invitation in their email inboxes:

MUZZLE TOV!
Jack and Randy Fingrut
Invite you to "Come! Sit! Stay!"
At an afternoon tea "pawty"
In honour of
The Bark Mitzvah
Of their Shih Tzu
Ming
'Pawsome' tail wagging fun!
It's my "pawty" and I'll bark if I want to!
In lieu of gifts please consider making a donation to Na'amat Toronto

It was always my secret plan to make a bark mitzvah for my adorable Shih Tzu, Ming, when he turned 13. Ming is an amazing dog – sweet, friendly and smart.

When we brought this tiny puppy home, my four children wanted to name him after something from *Star Wars*, like Ewok. No, I said, his name is going to be Ming. The name just popped into my head. The strange thing is that when his pedigree papers arrived about six weeks later, I was amazed to see that Ming had three ancestors named Ming. Eerie, don't you think?

Anyhow, it was about time for me to make a big party, and an afternoon tea party is my favourite type, so I started to bake an array of delectable desserts including dog bone-shaped shortbread biscuits, and I popped everything into the freezer. At that point, I planned the rest of the menu for the tea party.

I elected to go with the tea party "standard": party sandwiches, but no commonplace sandwiches. I upgraded to party sandwiches fit for this very special occasion. I paid a visit to a local bakery and asked if they could prepare challahs, double rye and double pumpernickel breads cut lengthwise. They were up for the challenge. They told me that only they could work the machine to cut the breads the way I wanted and they did a wonderful job.

The day before the event, I prepared some of the sandwich fillings and put them in the refrigerator. Then I picked up the breads, and the amazing sandwiches were prepared with the assorted fillings. The sandwiches were not cut into individual pieces. Instead, they were covered well in plastic wrap and placed into large Ziploc baggies and stored in the refrigerator.

Next I prepared a few varieties of dough for scones. I rolled and, with a cookie cutter, I cut the dough out into pretty little flowers. The cut out scones were layered on parchment paper in airtight containers and refrigerated.

My guests would be greeted by the perfumed air of the delicious scones baked up fresh that morning – all set to be served with strawberry jam and clotted cream. Lastly, I shopped for all the fresh fruit for the fruit platters and some interesting candies that would finish off the perfect tea party table.

On bark mitzvah day, the table was set, buffet style, with all kinds of sweet delights. The scones were baked, the fruit platters were made up and the shortbread dog biscuits were presented in bone-shaped dog cookie tins. Just before the guests arrived, the amazing sandwiches were cut and arranged on platters ready to be enjoyed. It was great fun, especially for Ming, who loved the company and the cute dog treats and toys he received, but best of all he loved cleaning up all the crumbs.

P.S. Ming's Bark Mitzvah raised a substantial amount of money for Na'amat Toronto, which was needed in Israel more than ever this summer.

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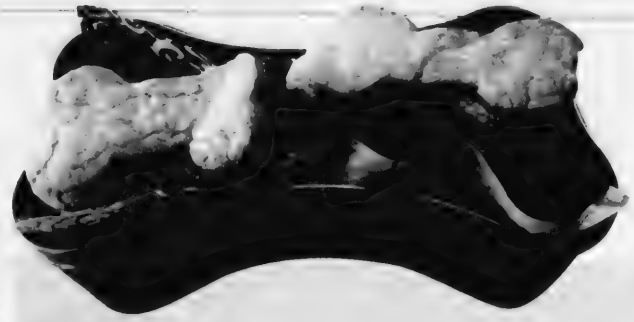

Cookie Cutter (Dog Biscuit) Shortbread Cookies

- ❑ 1 1/2 cups plus 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- ❑ 1/2 cup sugar
- ❑ 2 tsp. pure vanilla
- ❑ 4 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ Icing sugar for rolling

Prepare baking sheets lined with parchment paper.

In a food processor, or by hand, mix butter, sugar and pure vanilla. Gradually blend pulse or blend in flour.

Divide dough into four bundles, wrap well in plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour.

Preheat oven to 325. Remove dough from refrigerator and unwrap. Use icing sugar on the top of the dough and on the counter or pastry board to prevent the dough from sticking. Roll out one bundle to about 1/2-in thick and cut with desired cookie cutters. Place each cookie on the prepared baking sheet at least one inch apart.

Bake for 20-25 minutes, until the edges begin to brown. Cookie Cutter Shortbread Biscuits freeze well in an airtight container.

Butter Tarts

- ❑ 1 cup unsalted butter
- ❑ 2 cups brown sugar
- ❑ 2 cups golden corn syrup
- ❑ 2 tsp. pure vanilla
- ❑ 4 eggs
- ❑ 1 cup blanched sliced almonds
- ❑ 1 cup sultana raisins, packed
- ❑ 4 eggs
- ❑ 48 3-in. tart shells

Cut butter into squares and place in a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover and melt on high power for one minute. Add the brown sugar and corn syrup, cover and return to microwave for one additional minute. Add vanilla and whisk until combined and smooth. Cool.

Line three baking sheets with parchment paper. Arrange tart shells on baking sheets so they do not touch. Divide the raisins between 24 shells and divide the almonds between 24 shells. In a small bowl, beat the eggs. Add 4 tablespoons, one tablespoon at a time, of the cooled mixture to the eggs, whisking each spoonful into the eggs. Then combine the egg mixture into the butter and sugar mixture. Fill shells to the top, using a 1/4 cup measuring cup helps to control spill-over.

Bake in 350-degree oven for 20-25 minutes or until filling is bubbling and tart is golden. Cool on rack. Butter tarts freeze well in an airtight container.

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THOMAS (MINUK) ALI

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Pleasing Party Sandwiches

16 breads total: 12 horizontally sliced breads including 4 square challahs, 4 double rye breads with seeds, 4 double pumpernickel breads and 4 regular sliced breads including 4 square challahs.

- ❑ 5-6 dozen large eggs
- ❑ 15 tins flaked white tuna in water
- ❑ 1 1-litre jar Miracle Whip Light
- ❑ 1 350-ml jar Bick's Sweet Relish
- ❑ 1 jar sliced olives, drained
- ❑ 1 large container of margarine
- ❑ 2-3 containers of Philadelphia cream cheese, 500 g each
- ❑ 1 small bunch of fresh chives
- ❑ 2 jars of maraschino cherries, drained and dried on paper towels
- ❑ 2 jars pitted olives with pimento, drained
- ❑ 4 jars Bick's gherkins, drained

Fillings

Fill a large pot 1/2 full of water and add eggs. Bring water to a boil and turn off the heat; let the pot sit on the burner for 20 minutes, and then drain. Cover pot with the lid, hold the lid on and shake the pot. This will help crack the eggs. Run cold water over the eggs to cool and drain again. Shell eggs and mash them with a potato masher until fine. Add in about 2 tablespoons Miracle Whip Light per dozen eggs and mix well.

Add in more Miracle Whip if necessary, until the chopped eggs are smooth and easy to spread. Add in sweet relish, about 2 tablespoons per dozen eggs, or to taste. Refrigerate.

Drain tuna well and mix in approximately 1-2 tablespoons Miracle Whip per can (adding more if necessary) until tuna is smooth and easy to spread. Add in the drained sliced olives. Mix well and refrigerate.

Chop chives finely and add to one container of cream cheese.

Take margarine and cream cheese out of the refrigerator to soften before assembling the sandwiches.

Rolled Sandwich Assembly

Remove crusts from horizontally sliced breads. Gently roll each slice with a rolling pin. Spread lightly with margarine. Spread filling evenly over the bread, leaving a small margin along the edges. Fillings can be varied i.e. half tuna and half egg, or cream cheese, egg or tuna. Do not mix the cream cheese and maraschino cherry rolls with a savoury filling. Line gherkins, for egg or chive cheese, and olives for tuna, at one end and roll up tightly. Wrap four similar rolls at a time in plastic wrap and store with other rolls in a large Ziploc bag. Refrigerate. Plain cream cheese rolls are prepared with maraschino cherries placed in a row at the end before rolling.

Remove sandwiches from refrigerator just before serving. When serving remove uneven ends and slice four to six slices per roll. Sandwiches slice best when cold, using an electric knife or a very sharp serrated knife.

Ribbon Sandwich Assembly

Roll regular sliced bread gently with rolling pin and spread lightly with margarine. Spread filling evenly over the bread leaving a small margin around the outside. Ribbon sandwiches can be made with two or three slices of bread (double decker). If using three, alternate fillings. Wrap two sandwiches together in plastic wrap. Store in Ziploc bag. Refrigerate. Remove sandwiches from refrigerator just before serving. When serving, remove crusts and cut sandwiches into ribbons, triangles or squares.

To prevent sandwiches from drying out, always keep breads and sandwiches well covered with plastic wrap until serving. Keep sandwiches refrigerated until serving and place leftovers back into refrigerator soon after serving. This recipe makes an abundant amount of sandwiches, more than enough to feed about 40 people. ■

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9:30 pm Dessert Reception

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Shurat HaDin Events

What's New

OCT. 30 - NOV. 6

by Lila Sarick

Thursday 30	Friday 31	Saturday 1	Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 5
Book reviews are on tonight at Beth Tzedec and Temple Emanu-El			Holocaust Education Week begins today		JVS job fair today	

Thursday, Oct. 30

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews great Jewish books in a 5-week series, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec. Oct. 30, *The Prime Ministers.*

JEWISH MEDITATION
Rabbi Yoel Glick discusses "Living the life of Jewish meditation," 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue.

BOOKS AND BISCOTTI
Cathy Tile reviews *The Wings of Invention* by **Sue Monk Kidd,** 1 p.m., Temple Emanu-El.

Friday, Oct. 31

TOT SHABBAT
Children and parents enjoy a Shabbat program for 7 weeks, 9:30 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. No charge. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

LIFE IN ANTIQUITY
Kathy Lowinger discusses, "Life in the time of Moses, Jesus and Mohammad," after 8 p.m. services. Temple Har Zion.

Saturday, Nov. 1

THE NEW WORLD DISORDER
Melanie Phillips in conversation with **Elliot Malamet** discusses "The New World Disorder: Fundamentalism, human rights and the future of democracy," 8:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.torahinmotion.org.

INTERFAITH FAMILIES
Rabbi Micah Streiffer discusses "Interfaith families and the Jewish community," 9 a.m., Temple Kol Ami, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill.

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 13 is Nov. 3. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

EDDY COHEN PHOTO

Sukkot fun

Meira Cohen paused for a moment on top of the inflatable slide at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation's annual Sukkot fair, Oct. 12. More than 1,300 people came to enjoy the petting farm, a rock climbing wall and the gorgeous weather.

Sunday, Nov. 2

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE
Associated Hebrew Schools holds an open house at 10 a.m., Kamin Education Centre, 300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill. RSVP pgreenspan@ahschools.com.

WIERZBNIKER MEMORIAL MEETING
The annual memorial commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the destruction of Wierzbnik will be held at 2 p.m., Bialik Day School, 2760 Bathurst St. **Samuel Kassow** discusses the Judenrat. For more information, **Reva,** 905-763-2709.

DO SOMETHING SWEET
Zachary Winkler holds a fundraiser for Hospital for Sick Children, with food, games and face-painting, 3-5 p.m., 81 Ramblewood Lane, Thornhill.

Monday, Nov. 3

ETHICAL KASHRUT
Yehuda Nestel discusses "Ecological and ethical kashrut," Beth Emeth, 7:30 p.m. $5.

VISION IMPAIRED CLUB
Vision Impaired Persons Club (formerly the Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired) meets at Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., at 7:30 p.m. for an evening of music and refreshments. $5/$7. For more information, **Bess** 905-508-2892.

JEWS AND ARABS IN ISRAEL
Alman Saif, of the Israel Prime Minister's Office, and **Ifat Baron** and **Safa Garb** discuss "Investing in a shared future," Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., 7:30 p.m. RSVP 416-631-5817 or email tlevy@ujafed.org.

CAMP RAMAH OPEN HOUSE
Camp Ramah holds an information session in Thornhill, 8 p.m. (address given upon RSVP). RSVP **Aviva Millstone** 416-789-2193, ext. 2137 or aviva@campramah.com

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El continues its fall lecture series, with **Iain Scott** discussing "Canadian tenors." All lectures at 2 p.m. $12. 416-449-3880.

BOOK REVIEW
Between Gods, by **Allison Pick** is reviewed at Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 1 p.m. RSVP 416-781-3511.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Sara Horowitz discusses "The relationship of mothers and daughters during and after the Holocaust," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue.
Medina Theatre presents a staged reading of *Sun in my Eyes* by **Jack Kuper,** Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m., Free.

Tuesday, Nov. 4

LUNCH AND LEARN
Kathy Kacer discusses her new novel *Shanghai Escape* and "The power of Holocaust stories," 12:15 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

JVS CAREER AND JOB FAIR
JVS holds a career and job fair, 2-4:30 p.m., Bathurst-Finch Community Hub, 540 Finch Ave. W. To pre-register, email hubjobfair@jvstoronto.org.

DAYTIME SPEAKER
Avi Benlolo discusses "The new anti-Semitism," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30.

CHUG HA-TANACH
Seymour Epstein teaches chapter 104 of the Book of Psalms, Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ADULT CLASSES
Chabad of Markham offers a Talmud class for women starting tonight. Hebrew reading class for beginners starts Nov. 6, 8 p.m. For information on other classes, call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Wednesday, Nov. 5

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Jewish prayer and meditation: Connecting with God," Baycrest Terrace Synagogue, 55 Ameer Ave. 8 p.m. Free. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

SONG OF SONGS
Hana Werner discusses "Scroll of Esther," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. $60 for 10 sessions, $10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Thursday, Nov. 6

YIDDISH VINKL
Bernice Eisenstein discusses her book *I was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St., noon. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
The film *Hitler's Children* will be shown at the Barbara Frum Library, 2 p.m.
- **Waltman Wade Beorn** discusses "Ruthlessly and Mercilessly: The German Army and the Holocaust," 7:30 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.
- Effective parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children aged 2-10. Starts Nov. 3, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC or Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre.
- Life Skills for today's woman: A 6-session group for women on time and stress management and other topics. Starts Nov. 4 at 2:30 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave., or Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. at Lipa Green.
- Living with teens: A 6-session group for parents of teenagers. Starts Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m.
- Widow/widower bereavement group for under 65: A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m.
- Looking ahead: A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals. Starts Nov. 4 at 7 p.m.
- One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session group for families experiencing separation and divorce. Separate groups for children and parents. Starts Nov. 5, 6:30 p.m.
- Widows and widowers over 65: A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts Nov. 6, 2:30 p.m.
- The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women to learn how to express anger. Starts Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
- Adult Children Losing a Parent: A 6-session group for adults who have recently lost a parent. Starts Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
- High-conflict divorce: A workshop for parents, not for people in an abusive situation. Nov. 6, 6:30 p.m.
- Let's be blunt: A forum for parents on teens and drug and alcohol use/abuse: Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. Free but registration required. **Tanya Levy** 416-631-5817.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Liz Pearl** reads from her new book *Living Legacies: A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Jewish Women (IV)*, Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and stay for **Jack Newman's** discussion of "The Yiddish theatre of Moscow and Second Avenue," at 1:30 p.m. Doors open at 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
Memoir/Legacy Writing workshop, led by **Liz Pearl,** 1-2:30 p.m., Nov. 18, 25, Dec. 2. Register by Nov. 13, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 4, **George Stern** discusses "Vanished Boyhood," 10 a.m.; Nov. 5, **Tomaz Jardim** discusses "The trials of Ilse Koch," 1:30 p.m.; Nov. 6, lecture on "Building your immune system naturally," 1:30 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.
- Cantorial soloist **Rachelle Shubert** presents a workshop on music and well-being, Nov. 18, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents "The Jews of Old Toronto," Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "The genius of Michaelangelo," Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 1 p.m.
- Stroke recovery and Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 a.m.
- Drop-in duplicate bridge, Thursdays 1 p.m.
- Experimental drawing and painting for all levels, Nov. 20- Dec. 15, 9:30 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What is a Jewish film?" Nov. 5-26, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
- *Oscar Winner,* an evening of stand-up comedy with **Nik Rabinowitz,** presented by the South African Film Festival, Oct. 30, 7 p.m. $75 (including reception.) For tickets, visit www.donationaid.com/tsaff2014.
- Holocaust Education Week presents a symposium for young adults on the topic of "Collaboration," Nov. 2, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Free. Register at www.holocaustcentre.com/HEW/YPs.
- *The World Knew: Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity* is on display at the Al Green Theatre, Nov. 4-6, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Tickets on sale now for *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- PJ Plus a program of active Jewish learning for parents and children, ongoing to Dec. 21. Children 18-30 months at 2 p.m.; 2 1/2 to 3 years at 3:30 p.m.
- Got Shabbat? Presented with PJ Library, ongoing to Dec. 19, Shabbat family party for children up to 4 with caregivers, 10 a.m.; Shabbat club, drop-off program for children 3-5 at 12:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles. Nov. 3, "Love Me Do: First Hits," 7 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *As Seen Through These Eyes*, Nov. 9, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Hilary Helstein.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Remembrance Day Ceremony Nov. 11, starts at 10:50 a.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025
- Watercolour printmaking, for adults and children, Oct. 21-Nov. 11, 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** presents "Experimental Mix Media," Nov. 20- Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
- All levels welcome at "Fundamentals of drawing and painting," Nov. 20-Dec. 11, 10 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents an examination of how films soaked up political and cultural attitudes, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. ■

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SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Depression without feeling 'depressed'

Dr. Michael Gordon

The story was a bit unusual. The patient was 80 years old, a successful executive whose family doctor was concerned about his developing some degree of cognitive impairment – a common reason for people to be referred to my clinic. Moreover, the family doctor was a bit concerned that his otherwise very active and successful man was beginning to lose weight for no apparent reason.

On careful questioning and after he categorically denied feeling "depressed" when asked directly, the man described the events surrounding the time that he began to lose weight. He was turning 80. He realized that he might not have – to paraphrase him – "a lot of time left," having lost a number of friends and relatives in the past couple of years at about his age.

He realized that he had some "organizing" to do in terms of making sure his estate was in order and that his investments were up to date and that all the necessary documents were in place. He thought about re-doing his will and then started reading things about so-called "advance care planning" and "living wills" and began to become immobilized as he experienced some degree of panic.

He said he lost his appetite and his sleep became disrupted. He began to notice various aches and pains that bothered him more than usual, and his bowels became erratic. Then he started medicating himself, in addition to what he was receiving from his physician, to help him sleep.

It was at this point that the referral was made to my office. Because there is a waiting time, many of his symptoms appeared to have been resolved by the time I saw him. Most importantly, his weight had started to climb back up and his sleep improved, but he was using a sleep medication. At no time did he use the word "depression" to describe his mood.

After a full geriatric evaluation, the medical resident who saw the patient with me and I both came to the conclusion that, looking back, it was very likely that the man was experiencing a "vegetative" manifestation of depression at about the time of his 80th birthday, with that milestone being the precipitating event.

> *We must always remember that not every clinical condition is typical*

It was surmised that the collection of symptoms, which are the kinds one often sees with other kinds of medical problems, were not recognized as a manifestation of the spectrum of clinical depression, especially when the patient did not use that term or other often-used synonyms such as "feeling blue," or express typical mood-type symptoms such as rumination about negative things and lost friends and family members.

By the time the assessment was over and the discussion completed, this became the operative diagnosis. The plan was to gradually discontinue sedatives, which may actually aggravate symptoms of depression and can be very habituating, and to have the man periodically measure and record his weight and make some dietary and life-style adjustments to his activities to combat his bowel problems. He was also told to increase his exercise program, since exercise has been shown to have a beneficial impact on feelings and symptoms of depression.

We must always remember that not every clinical condition is "typical," and one of the characteristics of medical illnesses in older people is they are sometimes what I call "atypically typical," or as one might say in English, "I've seen it before."

The reason that recognizing this particular picture of depression is important is that if the "physical" symptoms are considered at face value, a whole range of tests may be undertaken, only aggravating negative feelings and subjecting the patient to sometimes disturbing tests that will be fruitless. ■

Family Moments

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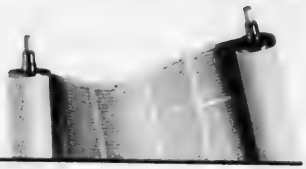
Parshah

Lech Lechah | Genesis 12:1 - 17:27



Yacov Fruchter says having children is the most selfless, and selfish, act
Rabbi Shalom Spira explores the genesis and paradox of the Magen David
Rachael Turkienicz argues the journey of a life can take longer than a lifetime

Yacov Fruchter

My brother-in-law recently asked me if I thought having children is a selfish act. Considering that he had posed the question to a sleep-deprived father of a 10-week-old and an almost three-year-old who is obsessed with her father, I found the question surprising.

I responded by saying, "Having children is the most selfless selfish act." Selfless? All loving, nurturing parents give as much of themselves as possible to ensure that their children feel loved. The first paragraph of the *Shema* instructs us to love God with all our hearts, souls and strength. When I think about what we do for our children, that sounds familiar!

Selfish? Why do we choose to have children? Some might answer because it is a mitzvah to procreate, "*Peru Urvu*," as we recently read in Parshat Bereshit. And from a biological perspective, all living things aim to reproduce. Others might do this to increase the number of Jews in the world to continue our legacy.

Or perhaps we want to have children to nurture, raise, educate and love. They, in return, will love us, respect us, learn from us, continue our traditions and take care of us when we need their support.

But I believe honest people will admit that there is some selfishness in their desire for children. In this week's parshah, we learn about Sarah and Abraham, who are promised a multitude of descendants for following God's instruction to leave their land.

The parshah begins with Abraham being instructed: "*Lech lecha*." Perhaps this tells Abraham, the quintessential father, that his grand selfless act of leaving all he knows for the future generations of the Jewish People gains much for himself – a religion, a God, a nation and much yearned for children. Thus, being a little bit selfish gives us the capacity to be selfless. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And you shall be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2). The Gemara, Pesachim 117b, elucidates this to mean that Abraham's name will be featured in a benediction of the *Amidah* – that is, "Magen Avraham." The Gemara similarly explains that when David is promised that "I shall create for you a great name, like the name of the giants" (II Samuel 7:9), this means that his appellation will be incorporated into a benediction of the Haftorah – that is, "Magen David."

Presumably inspired by this Gemara, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Iggerot Mosheh*, Orach Chaim 3:15) grapples with the problem of how some synagogues can feature so-called Magen David geometric symbols on the Ark. Since the term Magen David refers to the Holy One, blessed Be He, how can a synagogue offer a physical representation? Is such iconic artistry not contraindicated by virtue of Deuteronomy 4:15-16?

Rabbi Feinstein answers (with perhaps a small dose of amplification by the present student) that the term Magen David actually has two distinct meanings. The Magen David hexagrams bear no relationship whatsoever to Pesachim 117b. Rather, they represent that David – through his heroic performance of mitzvot – publicized to humanity that the Creator is Sovereign over the heaven, the earth and the four compass directions. Indeed, the Gemara (Sukkah 37b) directs us to wave the lulav in those six directions, precisely in order to convey the same message.

Interestingly, Midrash Rabbah to Numbers 4:16 reports that David waved the lulav when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem in II Samuel 6:5. Moreover, Tosafot to Sukkah 37b derive the passages in *Hallel* that are synchronized with the lulav from David's prayer recited at the same juncture (I Chronicles 16:33-35). Thus, the hypothesized association between Magen David and the lulav may have merit. (See also Rabbi Abraham Isaac Sperling, *Ta'amei ha-Minhagim*, inyanei lulav nos. 792 & 807, for a parallel suggestion.) ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

The Torah portion describes the beginnings of covenant and the relationship that will grow between God and the Jewish People. We meet a Chaldean family, Terach, his sons, including Abraham, and their wives, including Sarah. Terach suffers the loss of a son and decides to move his family from their native land to Canaan.

The family gets as far as a place called Haran and we are told that Terach dies there, and Abraham, Sarah and the remainder of the family settle in Haran. It's at this moment that the Torah portion begins with "*lech lecha*" – God telling Abraham that he must continue the journey, but make it his own.

The Torah has described a father and a son who are vastly different in their approaches. Terach suffers the death of a family member and decides to move his family away to parts unknown for a new beginning. Abraham suffers the death of his father and settles where he is, no movement forward but rather stagnation.

When God reaches out to Abraham and Sarah, it is with the instruction to follow God to a place unknown, to Canaan. In other words, God leads Abraham to the destination his father had envisioned. The lesson of the human condition God has imparted is that the journey of a life can take longer than a lifetime.

And yet, the words "*lech lecha*," "go for yourself," clearly state that the journey must be a personal one and not the journey of his father. Within the visions of our ancestors, we can find ourselves and continue moving forward.

The challenges of life will always present themselves to us, and we can answer with vision or with stagnation. The beginnings of covenant show us God teaching Abraham and Sarah that we move forward, we innovate and we find our personal expressions. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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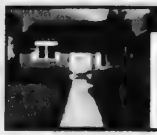

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Russians less likely to intermarry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

said she is a "so-called ba'al tshuvah... unfortunately, a minority in the Russian-speaking Jewish community." "I think the idea of Limmud is good," she said, "but I would like to have seen a bit more Jewish content – by that, I mean Torah content."

The question of difference was addressed at a panel discussion titled "What Makes Russian Jews Jewish," featuring Anna Shternshis, a professor at U of T's Centre for Jewish Studies, Yigal Kotler, a doctoral candidate at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Olga Levitski, a PhD candidate in sociolinguistics at the University of Ottawa. They discussed factors such as shared memory, a community bolstered not by religious observance but resistance to fascism, and a lack of acceptance of Russian Jews by "mainstream Jews" in Canada.

But they also noted that, as the Pew Research Center's recent "Portrait of Jewish Americans" shows, secularization and intermarriage among North American Jewry is rising steeply and that FSU Jews are actually more likely not to intermarry and to feel more connected to Israel. ■

Poverty is not uniquely Jewish

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

Federation CJA committed $6.8 million of it $30.8 million 2014 campaign tally to social services.

"What has changed in the last decade for sure is the focus on capacity-building and strength-building programs targeting younger people. Here at Ometz, working with youth is a priority. It doesn't diminish the work we're doing with people in chronic poverty, people with mental health issues where we are looking to increase their quality of life, as well as their skills and capacity. But in particular with youth, we're looking to break the cycle of poverty by providing academic support programs, financial capacity building is a big focus for us so that people understand the implications of their decisions today and how they can plan for their future," she said.

The hope is that if children living in poverty do better in school, are better fed and have better access to affordable housing, it will help them break the cycle, but she said Jewish agencies can't do it alone.

"I would stress the need for collaboration with the broader community, in terms of looking at Jewish poverty. Poverty is not uniquely a Jewish issue and the solutions are not going to be uniquely Jewish community issues and we really need to work in collaboration with other groups, with other coalitions, because if that stereotype still exists of Jews being different and affluent, this is another way to combat that stereotype, and it is another way to be effective, and we need that broader social movement in order to look at poverty on a macro scale," Karpman said. ■

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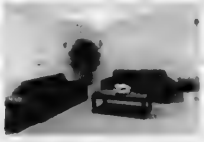

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 30, 2014

Rabbi Yom Tov Glaser: Surfing Rabbi

JODIE SHUPAC
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Rabbi Yom Tov Glaser, known to some of his followers as the "California Rabbi" and the "Surfing Rabbi," was in Toronto last month to promote his branded, two-day personal growth seminar, Possible You, which he'll run in Toronto Nov. 16.

After a non-religious upbringing in a star-studded west Los Angeles neighbourhood, during which the disillusioned young Glaser spent much of his time surfing and mountain biking, unexpected circumstances brought him to the Orthodox Aish HaTorah College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. There, he says he found the sense of truth he'd long been looking for, and he was eventually ordained as a rabbi. Since then, Rabbi Glaser has made it his mission to help people find their inner "awesomeness." *The CJN* chatted with him about truth-seeking, surfing and the power of music.

Why do they call you the "California" or the "Surfing" Rabbi?
I grew up in southern California, in a very well-off part of town called west Los Angeles. It was all movie and rock stars. The drummer from the Doors lived next door. Dustin Hoffman lived in the house behind us. My dad worked in clothing manufacturing.

From the age of 11, I wasn't interested in any of that. I was a serious truth-seeker. I had great questions and was looking for answers in a world that didn't impress me. Our family rabbi didn't have the answers I wanted, so I wrote off Judaism for a number of years.

I used to spend between six and eight hours a day surfing. It was a distraction from the pain of my fruitless search for meaning, and the attention I got from it was a Band-Aid over my fear of rejection. I also spent a lot of time mountain biking.

In my final year of university, my father's business went bankrupt. He'd promised me a world surf tour for my graduation, but I could no longer go. So I got a scholarship to study in Jerusalem with Aish HaTorah. I was basically just using it as a free trip to go surfing, and hoped to travel after. I thought Judaism was malarkey.

Then I got there and found my 12-year-long backlog of questions were actually being answered intellectually and honestly, from a real place. No blind faith or religious indoctrination. After that, I said, "I'm in," and have been in for the past 23 years. I've been teaching Torah internationally, speaking at synagogues and community centres, doing concerts.

It's clear to me that music is key to a positive Jewish experience and Jewish continuity. Once you start strumming that guitar and singing, it becomes a positive Jewish experience for people.

I still surf and mountain bike. I just surfed eight- to 10-foot waves in Ashdod and am heading back there for some more big surf! I commute in Jerusalem via mountain bike. The Old City capital staircases are my favourite obstacle. I also go off-roading.

What was your event in Toronto last month all about?
It was a kind of launch. I founded and developed a personal growth Jewish transformational seminar called Possible You in Jerusalem 13 years ago and have been running it there all these years.

Three years ago, I also started doing the seminar in New York. So I've been thinking, what's next? I have lots of students in Toronto whom I've met over the years, from the very observant to downtown hipsters who have been students of mine at Aish HaTorah in Jerusalem. For years, people have been trying to get me to come [to Toronto].

Finally, Rabbi Moishe Zionce, who founded and runs IGNITE Toronto [an organization that provides programming and motivational events] for the ultra-Orthodox community, put things in motion. He said, "Let's launch here." But, he felt the community needed to be introduced to the ideas before they would register for the seminar, so the event last month was a kind of introduction.

What goes on at the Possible You seminar?
The theme is helping people find their greatness. Human beings are awesome, and are all the more so when they recognize how awesome they are and try to radiate that. But what happens is that people, in their heads, are saying everything to themselves but how amazing they are.

It's become kind of my life's work to help people GPS what they're saying to themselves that isn't true – to identify the negative and limiting voices – and to help them generate that which is true about themselves.

The whole seminar is 24 hours. The first half is all about getting in touch with those negative voices within ourselves, which usually develop in childhood due to family dynamics and different things that happen to us. We also look at how we try to cover those negative voices up, because human beings automatically compensate for negativity, we make personality chess moves to protect the queen, so to speak, to protect ourselves from ever feeling the negativity. For example, if someone felt unlovable or unworthy, they may cover up by becoming a social butterfly or by becoming isolated and introverted.

So the first half is about getting really clear, 20/20 vision of the things you've been saying to yourself.

Rabbi Yom Tov Glaser, a.k.a. the "Surfing Rabbi."

Then, at the halfway point, something really amazing happens. People go, "I'm not crazy or bad," and the question becomes, "Well, who am I?" That's where the magic really begins, when you create that clearing and are able to get that pristine child back.

Then, you have the next 12 hours to create yourself. That half is full of life-affirming declarations that you can apply to your life – your profession, your relationships. It's done in a workshop format, so there's a lot of filling out charts, discussing with a partner, but also lots of music. I play music professionally, and throughout the seminar we have musical interludes that give people the chance to deepen the experience.

The course also comes with the Possible You handbook, which I wrote.

What elements of Possible You are Jewish?
Around the time of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, it became apparent to the rabbinic leadership that the Jewish individual was in trouble, that the prowess of human greatness was threatened. Something about the industriousness of man became too fast to find a sense of peace within one's heart. The rabbinic leadership recognized this, and there was a major boom of writing in the chassidic world, in the Lithuanian world specifically, about the greatness of the human being.

Then things got really busy. The industrial complex got much faster than the writings, there were massive pogroms. Then, the Holocaust and the destruction in Europe. For the past 70 years or so, this work in the Jewish world has been relegated to the top percentile of Jewish scholars and hasn't been trickling down to the laymen. That's where I come in.

We touch on a lot of different Jewish topics in the seminar.

Is the course geared to religious Jews?
It's totally non-denominational. It has nothing to do with observant Judaism or secularism. It's really about using the last several hundred years of Jewish sources and applying that to personal growth work. People of all ages and denominations come. I've had students in past seminars who were raised religious and left that path. The seminar helped them to look at Judaism with an open mind. Some were able to get over the resentment they had about Judaism but didn't go back to being observant, while others said, "I'm over my resentment and can go back to keeping Shabbat," or whatever.

People spend years in therapy uncovering the negative thought patterns they developed in childhood and trying to establish a healthier self-image. Are you suggesting that this can be done in a 24-hour period?
The seminar is not for people who have had major traumas. That's something you should seek therapy for.

Also, everyone who participates in the seminar leaves with a partner from the group who they worked with who becomes like a partner for life. They can continue working [on themselves] together. Also, the group itself becomes a unit that supports one another moving forward. They chat, plan meetings, and I stay connected to them. I come back into town and we meet, get together – it's not a love 'em and leave 'em situation.

What kinds of outcomes have you seen for participants after the seminar?
Some people say, that was the best few days of my life, but I'm not doing anything with it. Others say, that was the best few days of my life and it's sent me on a completely new trajectory. They put what they learn right to use. There's a full spectrum of what people get from it.

The personal growth industry is pretty popular these days. What sets you apart?
I'm creating a completely kosher, Torah-based experience of personal growth culture. Normally, Orthodox Jews would have to look outside their community for this type of experience. And the ultra-Orthodox would be suspicious of that. They're not going near any Anthony Robbins [a popular American motivational speaker] type. I'm offering a really kosher, Jewish and authentic experience. ■

Rabbi Glaser's website is www.thepossibleyou.org

God Cries

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

When Jews think of God, what comes to mind? I would wager it is usually the Father of rebuke who either gently but firmly guides his stiff-necked people or sternly warns of dire consequences and harshly punishes.

Of course, there are, as well, innumerable references to God as faithful and compassionate, the very essence of loving-kindness who blesses His people with peace.

There is, however, an alternative vision in the popular imagination that is grounded in the Talmud. This alternative vision is prominent in post-Holocaust stories like this one:

"The rabbi of Radsin saw a cattle car standing on a siding. The doors were open, he looked inside, his blood ran cold, and he went to the nearest village. There, with the money he had intended to use to buy his train ticket to Warsaw, he bribed a few farmers to take the corpses out of the car and bury them.

"When the corpses had been taken out, the rabbi still heard a sound in the car. He climbed in and looked. God was cowering in a corner of the car and crying. The rabbi refused to comfort him."

The crying God who needs consolation is a dramatic and powerful image. Its antecedent is found in the Talmud composed thousands of years ago. The Talmud quotes Jeremiah where God says that His "soul weeps in His distress over the pain of the Jews". Rav Tamir Granot writes that this joint weeping – the Jews and God – creates a new intimacy with God, the sort of intimacy that sometimes develops between people who reveal their shared suffering to each other.

Rav Granot cites a story by S.Z. Shragai about a Chassid who refuses to pray because he was angry at God after the Holocaust but who eventually relents:

"'Strictly speaking, I don't have to pray. Still, is the Almighty not in need and worthy of pity? What does He have in the world? What is left to Him? And if he was compassionate towards me and left me alive, He deserves for me to show compassion towards Him, too. That's why I got up to pray.'

"He finished speaking, tears rolled from his eyes and he began to weep: 'Woe...the Master of the Universe also needs pity.'"

This story stands as a striking rebuttal to the first story about the man who refused to comfort the crying God.

However, in both stories, the portrayal of God is the same – as identifying in the suffering of his people to the point of weeping with them.

What does this idea convey? Perhaps that God gave people free will and that they have too often used it for destructive rather than creative purposes. In that case, God reflects the pain, anger and despair of the victims. Obviously, He could choose not to allow evil acts to be committed, but that would make robots, not human beings of his creations. So, people remain free, with all the potential for good and mischief, and God is left to judge the wrongdoer and commiserate with the victims.

If this aspect of our tradition were better known and more prominently part of Jewish discourse, would it make a difference to today's Jews? Would people feel less alienated and distant from their religion? Would they understand that Judaism constitutes a multi-layered religious conversation throughout the ages? That it is not about easy answers to complex questions but rather a sustained engagement with the fundamental questions of life? Could it serve as the basis for the beginning of a thoughtful dialogue?

Limited knowledge of Jewish source texts in early years does not equip the university-bound student or the young professional with an appreciation of the depth of Jewish wisdom literature, the sweep of Jewish history and the range of discussions about issues of real concern and relevance today.

Organizations of various denominations struggle valiantly but mostly ineffectively, according to the Pew survey, to reach out to educate young Jews about their own birthright.

Serious people in a secular age of science and technology need to be engaged in a profound way if they are ever to explore their own religious heritage. It is devoutly to be wished that new avenues will be explored to spark an attempt at a meaningful renewal. ■

Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus of the University of Waterloo.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Always loved, never forgotten, Bev, Stephen, Sandra, Brian, Celia, Jewels and amazing grandsons, Matthew (namesake) and Ryan

Rabbi Steven Saltzman ז"ל

With Gratitude

On my first date with Steven Saltzman, he walked me down the main aisle of the sanctuary of the Adath Israel to see a cantorial concert. My last date with my husband, Steve Saltzman, I walked down the aisle of the sanctuary, alone, to meet his casket.

As I clutched the Book of Psalms he gave me as a marriage gift, I drew my strength from the love and support I felt from everyone in the sanctuary. It is with heart-felt thanks and gratitude to my Adath Israel family, my RCMP family, and all my friends and family in the greater community who have offered so much love, support and friendship in this tragic and challenging time.

Thank you for your cards, your words, your stories, your donations and your generosity of spirit.

May God Bless you.

(Rebbetzen) Frances Saltzman

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Kazdan, Jean	October 11, 2014	Private
Zatelman, Lena	October 12, 2014	24 Ravenscroft Circle
Kantorowitz, Ruth	October 13, 2014	718 Sheppard Ave W
Azzouz, Izak	October 13, 2014	50 Brentwood Cres
Singer, John Sheldon	October 13, 2014	440 Glengrove Ave W
Fichman, Mikhail	October 14, 2014	Private
Platner, Raphael	October 14, 2014	665 Roselawn Ave W.
Kasman, Albert	October 14, 2014	1 Northwestern Ave
Beliavski, Vladimir	October 15, 2014	Private
Braun, Miriam	October 15, 2014	1925 Steeles Ave E.
Rechnitz, Paul	October 15, 2014	17 Bonnacord Dr
Fox, Sheldon	October 15, 2014	79 Glen Park Ave
Winer, Thea	October 15, 2014	19 Rean Dr
Franklin, Murrel	October 15, 2014	90 Denbigh Cres
Cohen, Henri	October 15, 2014	Private
Pollock, Harold	October 16, 2014	65 Skymark Dr
Grunbaum, Helen	October 17, 2004	100 Promenade Circle
Levy, Jonah Sar	October 17, 2004	2 Elise Terrace
Aronova, Anna	October 18, 2014	1 Emerald Lane
Cohen, Lawrence	October 18, 2014	212 McNicol Ave
Elentukh, Ida	October 19, 2014	Private
Chlakman, Anatoli	October 20, 2014	Private
Pelc, Israel	October 21, 2014	N/A
Gutman, Arkady	October 21, 2014	Private

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Inside

Remembrance Day

Harbord Collegiate to honour Myer Tutzer Cohen, who died in WWI at age 22. **PAGE 17**

See also pages 15 and 16

A resource for women

'Yoetzet halachah' Sarah Cheses advises on the most intimate and sensitive questions. **PAGE 13**

Vigilant

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:37 p.m.	5:40 p.m.
Montreal	4:15 p.m.	5:19 p.m.
Toronto	4:42p.m.	5:45 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:37 p.m.	5:46 p.m.
Calgary	4:41 p.m.	5:51 p.m.
Vancouver	4:23 p.m.	5:31 p.m.

Goodbye Vancouver?

As housing prices continue to soar, a Jewish community struggles to stay together. **PAGE 8**

Holocaust Education Week

Opening event at the ROM features a discussion of the Hungarian Gold Train. **PAGE 22**

See also 10, 19, 20, 23, 24, 40 and 43.

The Ebola scare and Jewish ethics

Medical, religious experts weigh in on how to respond. **PAGE 25**

Second Story Press celebrates 25 years

Books on the Shoah for young readers have been a staple. **PAGE 40**

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Fizzling out in the West Bank, and luring Japanese tourists to Israel

An animated effort

The Israeli Embassy in Tokyo has released the first of several planned instalments of an anime web series aimed at attracting Japanese tourists to the Jewish state. Each episode will follow sisters Saki and Noroki's adventures as they travel to a different part of Israel. In the first video, they're occasionally joined by the embassy's mascot, Shalom Chan, an odd-looking, egg-like bird who chimes in with facts about the Holy Land. Some 20 media outlets covered the video's launch last week.

Ravers get low at Dead Sea

The second annual Dead Sea Rave attracted more than 12,000 Israelis and tourists who partied the night away at the lowest point on earth Oct. 30. The international electronic music festival takes place from sunset to sunrise at the foot of Masada and along the Dead Sea's shores.

Israelis party the night away at the foot of Masada. FACEBOOK PHOTO

Special shuttle buses brought ravers to the desert location from cities across Israel. This year's DJs included Britain's Paul Oakenfold, Dash Berlin, W&W and Sander Van Doom from the Netherlands, and Deep Dish from the United States.

SodaStream to close plant

Israeli drink machine maker SodaStream announced it will close its controversial West Bank factory, along with one in the Galilee, but not because of ongoing pressure from pro-Palestinian backers of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. SodaStream – whose pitchwoman, actress Scarlett Johansson, famously resigned as an Oxfam global ambassador over her position with the company – said the decision to move the facility from Maale Adumim to Lehavim, a Negev community near Be'er Sheva, was made for "purely commercial" reasons. The move will give the firm more manufacturing space and save it two per cent on overhead costs. The West Bank factory employs 850 Palestinians, who get the same benefits as their 250 Israeli colleagues. To work at the new facility when it opens in a year would require a longer commute and work permits to enter Israel. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

$50,000

The amount Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai said she'll donate to a UN agency in the effort to rebuild schools damaged by last summer's Gaza war.

20

The length in years of diplomatic relations between Israel and Vietnam, marked by a five-day film festival organized by the Israeli Embassy that ran until Nov. 6.

Quotable

"

Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokenu ... Melech Haolam, borei pri hagafen'

— Ayelet Scheier's take on the *Shema* bedtime prayer at age two. See p. 4.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Learn more about vegetarianism and Judaism with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

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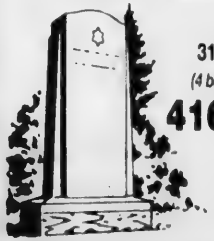

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Letters to the Editor

Rabbinic dialogue cheered

In the Oct.15 issue, *The CJN* published a letter citing Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik z"l as a basis for being critical of Orthodox rabbis participating in the Rabbi 2 Rabbi feature. I find it amusing that sometimes people will utilize isolated quotes from the Rav to ban this or that, while ignoring his permissive rulings on a variety of other areas that were also consistent with his "Weltanschauung." Furthermore, the Rav was famously chameleonic in his views, often offering different rulings to different disciples because of altered circumstances on the ground. I suggest that the Rav himself would recoil in disdain to hear the way he's being cited to bolster an individual's personal zealotry.

Rav Soloveitchik, as great as he was to North American Jewry, was not the solitary voice on all social issues for the Orthodox rabbinate. A number of my roshei yeshiva have encouraged dialogue with non-Orthodox rabbis as a way of furthering unity within our people.

A few other points are in order: Rabbi Soloveitchik was opposed only to theological dialogue, not to issues of communal importance. In fact, he concluded that participation with non-Orthodox Jews for political or communal welfare purposes is not only permissible, but obligatory.

Rabbi Soloveitchik formulated his opinion more than 50 years ago, when the landscape of the Jewish movements was entirely different. To the best of my knowledge, the Rav never addressed the specific issue of rabbinic dialogue in a Jewish newspaper. Thus, to extrapolate from the Rav's statement to the current column in *The CJN* is not only inappropriate, but inconsistent with the wisdom that rabbis are called upon to display.

I am proud to be a regular (Orthodox) columnist in your Rabbi 2 Rabbi column, where I engage in congenial and often spirited dialogue/debate with my new friend, Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, a Reform rabbi in Montreal. It is to our communities benefit to see how rabbis from different streams can sit down and speak as brothers and sisters.

Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, Thornhill, Ont.

Wolves in sheep's clothing

Yoni Goldstein bravely tackles the arrest of Rabbi Barry Freundel and gives suggestions to prevent future rabbinic misadventures ("It must not happen again," Oct. 23). Goldstein's suggestions are valid and a good first step, but sadly, those who choose to abuse will find a way.

Jewish clergy in Toronto have also been found guilty of abuse and stripped of their ordination by the Rabbinic Assembly. However, the loss of standing in the assembly has not resulted in the members voluntarily evicting themselves from our institutions and more importantly, our community has continued to support them and employ them in positions of trust.

Rabbis and cantors are human beings, with the same flaws and faults that are found in society. Abuse of power will continue to happen, no matter how many safeguards are in place. The shandeh is that our religious institutions protect these horrid individuals. The perpetrators simply ask for forgiveness, not from their victims, but from their employers, and they are deemed to be cured, re-employed, and once again, venerated by their congregants. They are truly wolves in sheep's clothing.

Sheryl Lipton
Toronto

Kotel compromise is valid

Norma Baumel Joseph criticizes Anat Hoffman, leader of the Women of The Wall, for agreeing to have women pray as a group at Robinson's Arch instead of the main Western Wall plaza ("On compromising," Oct. 15). Women as individuals have always been allowed and encouraged to pray at the Kotel, but women as a group with a Torah scroll praying there is an idea imported from America that has never really been accepted in Israel.

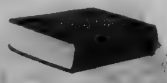
The ultra-Orthodox men and women are willing to allow alternate services, whether all-female or mixed, as long as these prayer services are not held in their midst. The Robinson Arch location will, therefore, permit alternative groups to pray at the Western Wall without upsetting the status quo at the main Kotel area. If Hoffman, who has led Women of The Wall for more than 20 years and has suffered personal attacks in the process, feels the Robinson Arch location is a reasonable compromise, her supporters abroad should not be so critical of her decision.

Ezra Franken
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

When someone in your family passes away, you want everything to be done right, according to Jewish tradition. When my mother died, I didn't know half of what these things were. Benjamin's spent time with our family, explaining the significance of every sacred ritual. More than that, they made it ours. It was a beautiful way to honour my dear mother's life.

"They thought of everything."



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The kids are all right

Child-centred home rituals are well observed and show Judaism's ability to transmit heritage across generations, but can Jewish practice be meaningful for those without little ones?

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Cutler: Inasmuch as the synagogue is the centre of public Jewish life, the home is the silver bullet to ensuring a strong Jewish future. It is where we learn by mimesis, where the values of our tradition are passed along from parent to child.

Of particular importance to the Jewish home are rituals. Recently, I have especially loved the going-to-bed ritual my wife and I perform with our two-year-old son, Jacob. We put on his pyjamas, brush his teeth, read stories and sing the bedtime *Shema*. We sing the blessing recited by Jacob's biblical namesake to his grandchildren Ephraim and Menashe – *Hamalach Hagoel Oti*: "The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. May my name live on in them and the names of my forefathers, Abraham and Isaac. And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." Of late, Jacob has even begun to sing along.

Rabbi Scheier: I, too, love the children's going-to-sleep ritual. One of my favourite bedtime moments occurred about five years ago, when my daughter, Ayelet, who was then a precocious two-year-old, erred as she recited the *Shema*. She said, "Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokenu… Melech Haolam, borei pri hagafen!" She conflated the bedtime *Shema* prayer with the blessing for grape juice!

It was a transformative moment for me, because my daughter introduced something she had learned from an outside source into our bedtime routine. It meant that my wife and I were no longer her only influence and source of knowledge.

Without a doubt, though, my favourite home ritual is blessing my children at the Friday night dinner table. It's a beautiful moment, and a beautiful articulation of priorities. We often have guests in our home on Friday night, and the moment of private blessing tells our children – and us – that they are our highest priority.

Rabbi Cutler: When I was a camper at Camp Ramah, on Friday nights (when campers were most likely to feel homesick), a counsellor took it upon herself to offer the priestly blessing to whoever wanted one. When I became a counsellor, I took over the tradition. It was remarkably meaningful to me, and I hope to the recipients as well.

Now as a father, together with my wife, I cherish the opportunity to bless my son on Friday nights. Because of his early bedtime, the opportunity doesn't present itself every week. Lately, I've been appreciating the earlier start of Shabbat, which increases the likelihood Jacob will still be awake for at least the opening Friday-night dinner rituals.

I'm struck, though not surprised, that both of us find child-centred rituals to be our favourites. Research indicates that across religions, practices focused on children are the most observed. But what about those without children, and what about seniors? How do we project a Judaism that is meaningful independent of its connection to family? How do we foster a culture of joy in practice to adults in the absence of little ones?

Rabbi Scheier: The reason we focus on children is not only because it satisfies our most basic paternal/maternal instincts. It's because one of Judaism's highest achievements is continuity. As former British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote, "The focal point of Jewish life is the transmission of a heritage across the generations. Time and again in the Torah, we are drawn to dramas of the next generation. Judaism's focus is its children."

Still, your question stands. How can a religion that focuses on its children appeal to those without children, to those whose children have left home, or even to those who do not enjoy positive relationships with their children?

Perhaps the answer has to do with our institutions' ability to integrate children into the fabric of communal life. A synagogue without children has no future, and a community without an educational mandate vis-à-vis the next generations of leaders isn't fulfilling its duty. Even as we deal with sophisticated members who are engaging their Judaism on a high intellectual and spiritual level, there is always room for the children.

And even for those for whom engaging children is not a part of their regular home life, the value of continuity to the next generation can certainly be promoted and maintained in all of our communal activities. ■

How to reach us

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

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From the Archives | Rose Dunkelman

During World War II, as chair of Ontario Youth Aliyah, Rose Dunkelman, pictured here circa 1905, helped rescue children from Nazi persecution at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps and then helped secure their passage to and resettlement in what was then known as Palestine.

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

SeeJN | Centennial Medal

ADAM SCOTTI PHOTO

Mordecai Paldiel, left, of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation presented the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal to Liberal MP Irwin Cotler on Parliament Hill last week, in recognition of Cotler's efforts to advance human rights and Holocaust education. *Please see story at CJNews.com.*

From Yoni's Desk

The fowl smell lingers

Chickenshit. Now there's the power of language! It took one word, selected last week by a "senior Obama administration official" to describe Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to underscore the fault line between Israel and the United States. And what a word at that – a sophomoric bit of linguistic blending, a colloquialism that under most other circumstances might not signal much of anything. But in this specific case it was oozing with meaning. And if everyone else is wading through it, we might as well get our hands dirty, too.

The immediate implication of the fowl formulation is blunt: Israel-U.S. relations are at a low point – though perhaps not, as some have suggested, the lowest point – there is no other way to read it. Jerusalem and Washington have been sparring almost incessantly since the summer war, accusing each other of jeopardizing peace and security, in Israel and beyond. Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama seem to be on different pages, and the frosty atmosphere has worked its way through the ranks of both administrations. For many of Israel's supporters, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's apology to Netanyahu won't be enough. The smell lingers.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu's domestic opponents are squeezing him from all sides. The prime minister is accused of being petrified of peace on the one hand and shy when it comes to security on the other. But maybe that's what Israelis want: a leader cautious on peace and security – it would explain why Netanyahu polls higher than any of his would-be successors to the right and left. As Israelis struggled to find a Hebrew equivalent for the rooster reference, last Friday, an editorial cartoon in *Ha'aretz* placed a smirking Bibi in the pilot's seat of a plane set to crash into one of the World Trade Center towers. Whatever Israelis think about Netanyahu, most agreed that wasn't a suitable translation.

And what about Canada? Where do we fit in this drama? It's hard to believe Canadians would hear that sort of cock-a-doodle-do(o) from our governing party – these days, you probably wouldn't hear it from the opposition, either. That speaks to the current relationship between Canada and Israel, which is as good as it's ever been. Last week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper was greeted affectionately when he debuted new tax cuts at the Schwartz-Reisman Jewish community centre just north of Toronto. Perhaps Harper might next encourage his two good friends, Netanyahu and Obama, to search for some common ground. That would be an appropriate role for Canada to play here.

Back in Jerusalem, tension is mounting after the attempted murder of Yehuda Glick, a rabbi-lobbyist in favour of greater access to the Temple Mount for Jews. Israeli police killed his assailant, a veteran Islamic Jihad member, during a subsequent shootout in east Jerusalem. In a letter to the deceased's family, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas described him as a "martyr, defending the rights of our people and its holy places" and denounced the "vicious assassination crime committed by the terrorists of the Israeli occupation army." Sometimes there are simply no words to describe the essence of a man. Not even chickenshit. ■ — YONI

Reflections

Forwarding the past

Sarah Angrist

My parents left their shtetlach in Lithuania in the 1920s to settle in Montreal, where my father's grandfather and other relatives were living. Mother left behind her parents, two sisters, their children, and a brother. Many of those relatives were murdered in the Holocaust. Only a few survived.

The agony of separation on Mother's side between 1936 and 1941 was reflected in touching expressions of love and devotion in the letters her mother wrote – all in Yiddish.

"Our dearly beloved children. You must write us more often." "Got two letters and rejoice with them. Each word is precious but it only takes a second to read and then the pain and yearning returns." Again and again the verb *benken* – "to long" – appeared.

Mother's parents ran a bakery and boarding house in their home. By 1936, business was bad and Jews in Lithuania felt less secure. The price of bread was controlled. "The town commissar must approve and so that's how they don't let us live." Their hotel license was threatened and their business reduced as peasants no longer came to rent rooms. Their son-in-law "discussed it with the mayor and the result was that we could continue but must make improvements." It was not until my grandparents faced tough times economically and felt growing hostility against Jews that they begged to leave.

In 1938, we received the urgent question: "What's happening dear children about the trip? How great is the bitterness in the world and the troubles. We went to the JIAS office (Jewish Immigrant Aid Society). They said if we could claim to be farmers and had a visa for each person then we could leave. Therefore, my daughter, you should make an effort to find out everything in detail and immediately write us."

From left, Sarah's mother Pauline, Sarah, her father Frank and brother Velvi.

Since my parents were poor, Mother had trouble raising money to get them out. Sadly her dear ones had waited too long to get out. Her guilt lasted a lifetime.

Some aspects of life went on as usual. Aunt Malca had two suitors but couldn't decide whether to marry for love or security – the hometown fellow or the man from Shavl, a nearby town.

The upshot of this dilemma was that my aunt married the hometown guy, divorced him within a year, and then married the man from Shavl. That marriage endured their whole lives through thick and thin – concentration camp, the Red Army, their lost child, chronic illness, and several anxiety-producing migrations between Israel and Canada.

On the other side, Father's Socialist-Zionist family had begun preparing to make aliyah before leaving their shtetl of Keidan. They spent 10 years in Canada going to public schools while training as Shomer Hatzair chalutzim. They left for Palestine in the 1930s to help found several kibbutzim.

Deprived of grandparents on both sides of the family, I knew them only by hearsay until meeting some aunts and uncles in 1969 when my father died. Urged by my parents to write my grandfather as I was graduating high school in 1950, I protested that I didn't really know him.

He replied: "It's very true what you write that you have no concept at all about me... because you were only a baby when I left Montreal." He asked me to write him my ideas about special Jewish issues and indicate whether I was active in any movements.

When the Six Day War broke out, Father wrote his siblings in great anguish:

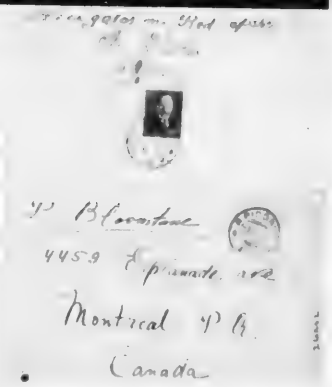
"I imagine what you're living through there…Now we can see how many friends we have and even more enemies who pretended to be good friends…My own children are very worried and would do everything to help…I myself signed up to do whatever I can…"

Since I found relatively few letters from Father's family, I asked Aunt Pessi in Israel to describe their history. In 1989, she obliged by writing about life in Lithuania, Russia, Canada and Israel:

"The story of my parents' and grandparents' home is of a world that was and is no more. It is telling of the past, of their legacy, of a culture that was destroyed, of a little Lithuanian town where hard-toiling Jews lived. It is to tell of a revolution that had failed, a world war, pogroms, refugees and wanderings."

Letters used to be important messengers of love, fear, joy, sadness, daily concerns and long-term hopes. Fortunately, my parents had saved letters from their families written in the 1930s and into the 1950s. In turn, I saved their letters to me from the 1950s and 1960s after I moved to the United States.

Fashioning stories from letters took significant time and thought as I searched for clues about the lives of the writers, interpreting their meaning with the help of memories, relatives and friends.



The envelope of a 1936 letter to the writer's mother from Latvia.

After adding Aunt Pessi's story, I compiled them to create a booklet called *Stories about my Family*. I sent them to my children and nieces. That was one step towards forwarding the past. Still, my urge was to transmit the "*pintele yid*" – the Jewish essence that so enriched my childhood and my adult life, beyond the family.

Pondering what to do with the translated letters and other materials, I contacted the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Canadian Jewish Congress about their archives. Both were interested, but since my parents had made their lives in Montreal, my brother, Frank Bloomstone, and I, chose the Canadian Jewish Congress.

I often wonder if I've done enough to transmit a world that is past. At least, I've made a start. I ask myself "What's next?" Perhaps it's time to write the personal saga of richly complex experiences that span my life from 1933 to 2014. There's a treasure trove of courtship letters still in boxes, so there's abundant raw material for a glutton like me to start writing again. ■

The Bloomstone-Zlatis family collection can be accessed online at www.cjhn.ca/en/permalink/cjhn280

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ROMSPEN

Housing a major concern for Vancouver Jewish community

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

If there's one factor driving change in Greater Vancouver's Jewish community, it's the cost of housing.

The high price of single detached homes in Vancouver, along the Oak Street corridor where most of the city's major Jewish institutions are located, has jumped 220 per cent in the last nine years. Today, an average single detached home in this area costs $2 million, while the average townhouse sells for $622,000, according to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver.

This reality has resulted in many Jewish families moving to outlying areas including East Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, White Rock, Burnaby and the TriCities of Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam.

With their dispersion from the core come challenges, says Shelley Rivkin, associate director of community affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver. "We're trying to focus on innovative and organic ways to keep people together, but it's more challenging to establish what their needs are as community members become dispersed," she says.

This four-bedroom house in Richmond, B.C. sold for more than $2.4 million. PATTI MARTIN PHOTO

> *The single most significant challenge here is affordability. It's been hard to attract families.*

Abba Brodt, a Montrealer who now heads the Richmond Jewish Day School (RJDS), says Jews in Vancouver have been making a tradeoff all the time. They move to areas where it's less expensive to purchase a home, but risk easy access to a key part of their Jewish heritage in the process, he says.

"It's a brutal set of choices, the fact that real estate is driving where people can live," he reflects. "Whether you're in East Vancouver or Burnaby, you're definitely pushing the boundaries of where the traditional community has always been. What does it mean if everything keeps spreading out, and what does it do to community cohesion?"

It does damage, says Rabbi Don Pacht, a local mohel and principal at Vancouver Hebrew Academy, an Orthodox elementary day school. "The single most significant challenge here in Vancouver is affordability," he says, reflecting on the 10 years he's lived in the city since leaving Rochester, N.Y. "That creates a challenge for families who want to stay frum and be in Vancouver. They don't have the option of moving to the outlying areas because they need to be within walking distance of the shul. So it's been hard to attract families and keep frum families here."

Adam M, 57, and his wife (not his real name) moved to Vancouver from Montreal in February, and the two have struggled to find affordable rental accommodation.

"There's great, great demand, a number of people looking at the same time, and you're fighting with tens of thousands of students who pick up units quickly and cheaply," he says. "When you get to a showing, you find up to eight others there in the space of one hour. So it's difficult and very frustrating." Adam is shomer Shabbat, which further limits his options for accommodation if he wants to be near the Jewish centre.

Three months ago, he leased a home he could ill afford while he continues to scour the advertisements for more suitably priced accommodations and for a job. For Adam, approaching the Tikvah Housing Society in Vancouver was a comforting experience, and they agreed to help subsidize his rent. The non-profit organization helps low-income Jewish individuals and families access safe, affordable housing.

"The Jewish community in Vancouver does help," Adam says, "but they need more resources from donors. I know a lot of religious people that would want to come and live in Vancouver with their families because of the lifestyle out west. The problem is living close to the Jewish community is too expensive."

Orthodox young people who want to marry and settle in Vancouver face an additional problem, Rabbi Pacht says. "Shidduchs are a challenge, only because they're just not done. People don't even think of looking around here for a shidduch, because any couple that has paired up here in the Orthodox community has been paired up for years. The singles know who the prospects are, and if there's no one in that pool for you, you know you're looking at Toronto, New York or Los Angeles.

"Once our young adults have established themselves in other communities and met someone over there, it's hard to uproot and come back to Vancouver, even though they may want to," he says.

On the education front, the vast majority of school-age Jewish children are not accessing any form of Jewish education, Brodt says, with only four out of every 10 kids attending Jewish camp, Jewish supplementary school and Jewish day school combined.

Rivkin has noticed that while 40 per cent of Jewish parents will support their kids going to Jewish elementary school programs, the degree to which they support their kids going to Jewish high school is different. (*The CJN* contacted Russ Klein, principal of King David High School in Vancouver, who refused to comment.) Of the kids that do attend Jewish day school, 40 per cent are receiving some assistance from the Jewish federation.

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Muslims must save Islam from Islamists

Gil Troy

After the horrific terrorist attacks in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, against a backdrop of Islamic State (IS or ISIS) both beheading and recruiting westerners, York University's Ahmadiyya Muslim Student's Association (AMSA) has launched a Stop the CrISIS campaign. Jari Quadrat, AMSA's president, noting that a York student was killed while fighting with ISIS, said, "We'd like to end it at that, and ensure that no more Canadian youth have any thoughts of radicalization from this day onwards."

I applaud AMSA's move as well as Quadrat's statement saying AMSA "wholeheartedly condemns the killings by both Martin Rouleau, 25-year old radicalized Muslim in Quebec, and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, the 32-year-old Muslim convert in Ottawa." But it would have been more impressive if AMSA had also condemned the killing of three-month-old Chaya Zissel Braun and 22-year-old Karen Yemima Muscara at the Jerusalem light rail station by another "radicalized Muslim" the same week.

The acts are not disconnected. Islamism is the noxious thread here. It links these incidents spread over thousands of kilometres in Syria, Israel, and Canada to 9/11, 7/7, Hamas suicide bombings, and many other recent abominations that are part of the "CrISIS."

Unfortunately, such boldness rarely happens on campuses today regarding Israel and Palestine. Israel has been so vilified, so caricatured, that rational conversation is rare, especially, I regret to say, in Muslim student organizations like AMSA. York, in particular, has been a hotbed of hostility toward Israel, hosting an annual week-long hate-fest making the libellous, ahistorical, invidious comparison between South Africa and Israel. Any campaign against "thoughts of radicalization" will only succeed if it tackles all radicalization, including the radicalized demonization of Israel.

Let me be clear: I'm not proposing that Quadrat and AMSA support Israel in any way. But condemning only some radicalism, only some terrorism, only some Islamism is morally sloppy and politically inept. It risks making "Stop the CrISIS" a false and obvious damage control gesture rather than a courageous educational and ideological move to tackle a serious problem throughout the Muslim world.

Support for Palestinian terrorism and radicalism often functions as the gateway drug of the Islamist movement. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry sounded like a foolish dupe when he echoed Arab leaders' claims blaming Israel for ISIS. But the toxic dynamics around the Israel-Palestine question, whereby wild lies are accepted as the gospel truth, hysteria trumps reason, radicalism is rationalized, the West and Israel are demonized, and terrorism is justified, all make the work of ISIS' Islamist propagandists easier. The culture of inflammation, incitement, and rationalized (but irrational) violence directed toward Israel is contagious. It spreads and cannot be contained by distinguishing between "good" targets and "bad" targets.

Quadrat and AMSA have made an important first step in saving Islam from Islamists, in fighting the radicals that pervert their religion, hijack co-religionists, and sully their honourable faith's reputation. But rooting out radicalism requires ideological root canal not Aspirin. It requires an honest assessment of where the toxicity comes from, how the toxicity resonates, and how one poisonous corner of Muslim political culture feeds into this broader toxic threat.

Raising people on hatred breeds hatred, but raising people on passionate political convictions tempered by civil conflict can actually breed the kind of love, mutual respect and democratic values necessary for fighting ISIS.

There are many ways to support the Palestinian cause and condemn Israeli actions. But for too long the Palestinian national movement – and much of the Muslim and Arab worlds – have been so blinded by fury against the Jewish state that they've failed to see the pathological impact of such rage on their individual and collective souls. Hatred hurts the hater. I invite Jari Quadrat, AMSA and Muslims throughout Canada, the West, and the world to start exorcising the demons of demonization and violence that are ultimately hurting them and many others around the world. ■

Get the men out of the mikvah

Sara Horowitz and
Rabbi Gilah Langner

The more we hear about the sexual predations of Washington, D.C., Rabbi Barry Freundel, the sadder and angrier we grow. In addition to the women victimized by the violation of the safe and sacred space of the mikvah, the case makes clear the particular vulnerability of women who convert to Judaism under Orthodox auspices.

In the weeks since the scandalous news broke, more and more women have come forward to share their difficult memories of conversion, especially of ritual immersion in the mikvah. Even after years lived in religious families and communities, the women remember their experiences not as spiritually momentous, but as traumatic and humiliating. And most of these memories are of halachic conversions done by the book, so to speak, not travestied by illicit cameras.

In non-Orthodox conversions of female candidates, male rabbis are never present at the immersion. They wait in a separate room, hearing the convert's blessings and the female mikvah attendant's pronouncement "kosher!" – indicating a proper immersion. Even when the beit din, or rabbinic court, includes women rabbis, usually only one accompanies the convert into the mikvah room. The others, respectful of the convert's privacy, wait outside.

We thought that Orthodox rabbis, too, wait outside, relying on what they can hear and the report of the mikvah attendant. Especially given the strictures concerning female modesty that govern Orthodox Judaism, we did not imagine that three men would literally witness a female convert's immersion.

Waiting outside the mikvah room was once the practice of many rabbis in Orthodox North American conversions. Some individual rabbis still do so. But in recent years, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), representing modern Orthodox rabbis, adopted an official policy: "Both male and female candidates must perform *tevillah*, immersing in a kosher mikvah, in the presence of a beit din. The modesty of a female convert is ensured throughout the process. The members of the beit din must witness the convert's head fully immersed in the water."

Ponder this: three men must witness the immersion of a woman protected from exposure only by a thin cloth that shields her body by floating above her as she immerses, with a hole for her head. One wrong move exposes her to the men's gaze. And when, as some women report, the fabric complicates the immersion – either preventing the woman from being in full contact with the water, or causing the rabbis to doubt that she has done so, she must get rid of even that covering. Why subject a girl or woman who wants to join our people to that kind of sexualized situation?

In what has become the norm for conversions in liberal Jewish North America, friends and family are invited to listen as the conversion candidate shares with the beit din what has brought him or her to this extraordinary moment. The mikvah ritual that follows marks the candidate's drawing nearer to God and becoming a part of the Jewish People.

Immersing in the waters of creation under the supervision of a mikvah attendant of the same sex, the convert utters the traditional blessings and hears a resounding "Mazel tov!" from the rabbinic panel who wait in a separate room. Afterward, the new member of our people receives blessings and good wishes from the rabbis and guests.

Surely female converts to Orthodox Judaism deserve the same joyous, respectful, and spiritually uplifting experience. But in the growing conversation about conversion, we hear, instead, recollections of feeling shamed, confused and disempowered.

A first step forward is to get the men out of the mikvah when women are immersing. It is high time for the RCA to overturn its policy. No male rabbi should be in a mikvah room when a woman is immersing. Ever. ■

Gilah Langner is a Washington, D.C., rabbi and educator. She and Sara Horowitz co-edit the journal Kerem.

The first Jewish Liberal-Conservative

Michael Taube

It's amusing to watch some Jewish Liberals tie themselves into knots as they try to explain the community's massive shift to the Conservatives.

Here's a recent example. Zach Paikin wrote on cjnews.com, "Privately or publicly, explicitly or implicitly, at some point, somebody Jewish has told you that he or she only votes based on one issue, and that's 'who's best for Israel.'" He claimed he's heard this "several times," including from a "life-long socialist" who voted for Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2011 because she felt "the Liberals and the NDP are wishy-washy on Israel."

Paikin's friend is right, but that's beside the point. The young Liberal commentator is unwilling to accept the fact (or remains in denial, like many other members of his political brood) that the vast majority of Jews who vote Conservative are doing it for reasons other than Israel. They believe in smaller government, lower taxes, fiscal prudence, increased privatization, trade liberalization and a strong foreign policy worldwide.

Tiresome left-wing fulminations that Jews overwhelmingly support government intervention, universal health care, the welfare state, and UN peacekeeping missions (among other things) are entering the dustbin of history. Liberals can deny this political transformation until they're blue in the face – or, in this case, red. Shouting it from the rooftops doesn't make it so.

Wait, it gets better.

"According to the Prophet Isaiah," wrote Paikin, "we are supposed to act as a light unto the nations. In the Canadian context, this can be interpreted to mean that we should serve as an example for other communities to follow." Hence, this "steady abandonment of our broader commitment to building Canada is most certainly not that."

In other words, biblical canon – written long before the advent of the modern political party system – apparently compels Jews to act, support, defend ideas and presumably vote in a particular fashion. Oh, and build a Canada in the most liberal of visions.

Following this logic, no Jew, Christian or Muslim should ever vote for a right-leaning party in any country. It's all been accounted for in the religious texts, after all.

In fairness, Paikin's position isn't unique among Canadian Liberals. Our modern political process is rather polarized, meaning that fierce defences of ideological positions are rather commonplace. Although I've been critical of the federal Tories for not being fiscally conservative enough, I'm certainly no better.

Then again, neither was Henry Nathan, Jr., Canada's first Jewish Liberal-Conservative politician. Nathan, a merchant in Victoria, B.C., was appointed to the House of Commons during its first session on Nov. 24, 1871. This was just after his province had joined Confederation. He also became the first Jew elected to our Parliament the following year and would sit until 1874.

In both instances, Nathan was elected under the Liberal party banner. Yet all B.C. politicians were theoretically aligned with Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives – or, as they were also called, the Liberal-Conservatives.

Historian Abraham Arnold wrote in the 1971-72 volume of MHS Transactions that "Henry Nathan was recorded as a Liberal." When he examined "his private letters to his political mentor Dr. Helmcken," it was clear Nathan had "played a conservative role and refused to support the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie when Macdonald was defeated in 1873."

Indeed, the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties were very different than today's versions. Nathan's support for the Tories was likely motivated by personal and political reasons, too.

Why do I bring up this historical fact? To make this point: Jewish Liberals enjoy discussing the historic ties between the community and their political party. Yet Canada's first Jewish politician, a Liberal, was a strong supporter of Canada's first Conservative government.

Ergo, did this political shift suddenly occur with the Harper Tories, or has it been going on since Macdonald's time? You decide. ■

The dignity Holocaust survivors deserve

Dov Harris

It is surely a blessing to have been born a Jew, to relish a time in our history when we flourish as never before and reap the benefits of a resurgent people. But not everyone. There are Jews whose birth made them a target for bestial persecution, who survived the Shoah but could not prevail over their past. Many of them have lived their lives since the Holocaust sunk in poverty.

As matters stand now, save for a few remarkable individuals and organizations in our communities, the vast majority of us are ignorant of the destitute Holocaust survivors who live in our midst. We visit Yad Vashem, commemorate Yom Hashoah and yet never give a thought to visit a destitute victim of Nazi depravity. Moreover, tens of thousands of Holocaust victims from the former Soviet Union (FSU) hardly figure on our radar, as though the Iron Curtain was never lifted.

We have launched highly successful campaigns to assist and support our fellow Jews. And yet, the plight of the poor survivor is rarely promoted as a central feature of our fundraising campaigns. It begs the question: why the difference? Could it be for the subversive reason that impoverished survivors embarrass us by their presence, to the point where we simply look the other way?

Many survivors of the Shoah have escaped the horrors of the past to build splendid lives. They instil a sense of pride even awe. The destitute survivor, on the other hand, is a depressing sight, an unheroic figure whose shadow falls across our self-image, the very antithesis of how we see ourselves as a renascent people.

This same mindset stalked survivors in the early years of the State of Israel. Some of them felt as though they were seen as nothing more than sheep who went to the slaughter. They experienced contempt, and they remained silent.

The Joint Distribution Committee, which has done outstanding work helping destitute survivors, receives about 1.5 per cent annually from funds raised in annual UJA and CJA campaigns to assist the welfare of Holocaust victims in the FSU. Considering the dire state of these people, this meagre allocation should perplex everyone.

We're at a juncture where we can choose to either continue with the status quo or take action. It's a decision we must make following the seismic change of policy toward the destitute survivor made in Israel on Holocaust Memorial Day this year, when the Knesset approved an increase of 1 billion shekels ($300 million Cdn) each year to aid destitute Nazi victims. This did not happen in a vacuum – the sheer weight of the financial hardships facing survivors was conclusively set out in a survey published by the Foundation for the Benefit of Holocaust Victims in Israel on the same day.

One survivor dies every 45 minutes, more than 1,000 every month, and some 13,000 every year. Their average age is 85. Of the approximately 193,000 survivors currently in Israel, 50,000 live below the poverty line, some in extreme conditions. Over the past two years, one-in-five survivors has been forced to choose between buying food and buying medication. In the FSU, the situation is even worse.

Israel is acting at last in a manner that brings credit to the Jewish state, but it can't do so on a global scale. Faced with the evidence, dare we turn away from doing our share?

With a superb record of rescue, the Canadian Jewish community is well positioned to initiate a global emergency campaign for Holocaust victims in the FSU. Every hour is a lost opportunity to make a precious connection.

We must recognize the survivors as our brothers and sisters, and see ourselves as their keepers. Doing so will not only accord them the dignity they deserve, it will mark the beginning of a journey to retrieve our own. ■

Dov Harris, now retired, is the former director of financial resource development in regional communities for United Israel Appeal – Canada.

News

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Ex-Shin Bet chief warns Canada over escalating terror

PAUL LUNGEN
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Avi Dichter has a message for those who believe the attack on Parliament by a Muslim extremist was an isolated act, a one-off unlikely to be repeated.

History proves otherwise, he said. The first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 was by a car bomb, which did damage and caused casualties but didn't topple the buildings. The second in 2001 was catastrophic.

Terrorists have a history of escalating their attacks, going from a small scale to assaults that are serious and ultimately to those that are catastrophic. It is the job of security and police services to ramp up their intelligence gathering capabilities and defend targets to ensure the threats remain manageable and not devastating, he said.

Dichter knows of which he speaks. A former minister of home front defence in Israel, he earlier served as director of Shin Bet, the country's internal security service. He was appointed following the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Dichter was in Toronto last week as a guest of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). During his visit, he briefed select members of the community on the security situation facing Israel, including the growth of ISIS as an important regional player.

Asked by *The CJN* to comment on the terrorist attacks that saw Islamic extremists run down and kill Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent in Quebec and another shoot Cpl. Nathan Cirillo at the National War Memorial in Ottawa before entering Parliament, Dichter said it was incredible that a man with a long gun could enter the legislature unopposed.

There is a basic rule of security, Dichter explained. "You have to have two rings of security. The first is intelligence, and because intelligence fails in about 90 per cent of events, you need a second ring, ground troops, security barriers."

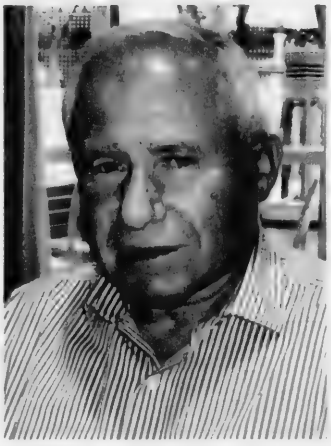
Canadian security personnel, in going over the events of the day, should operate under the assumption that gunman Michael Zehaf-Bibeau shot the prime minister and other MPs.

Once you assume that worst, "the event should be taken as an anchor to change dramatically the modus operandi of security of the prime minister, of parliament and the other dignitaries," he said.

"When you deal with the event in Ottawa, it will be a huge mistake to believe the next step will be a little bit more. It can move from a simple event to a more horrible event," Dichter warned.

Canada is not alone in experiencing security lapses that could have been catastrophic. An intruder broke into the White House and in another incredible security lapse, an individual with a criminal record armed with a handgun shared an elevator with President Barack Obama in Atlanta, Ga. Dichter said these breaches must be addressed with the utmost urgency.

Turning to the Middle East, Dichter said the evolution of the name used by Islamic extremists in Syria and Iraq indicates how their strategic goals have changed. They used to call themselves ISIL, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Now they term themselves the Islamic Caliphate, suggesting they are not content with territorial limitations.



Avi Dichter

> *When you deal with the event in Ottawa, it will be a huge mistake to believe the next step will be a little bit more. It can move from a simple event to a more horrible event.*

The group's military has doubled in size in just the last year, from 20,000 to 40,000 troops. Air strikes alone will not be sufficient to stop their march across the region, he said.

Success against ISIS will require a combination of air strikes, ground troops and effective intelligence. Captured ISIS personnel can give up actionable information, he said, but "it takes time. It doesn't happen in one day."

"I know ISIS is a group of soldiers and officers who served in Saddam Hussein's army. They are professionals who know how to fight. They have strategy. They have tactics and their main tool is not three *far-kakte* aircraft they captured. Their main tool is enthusiasm."

No one knows how recent changes in the region will play out. "We're barely at the end of the beginning," Dichter said.

As for Israel, the main effect of ISIS' success may well be that "the war enthusiasm might leak to the Palestinians" as well as to Israeli Arabs.

"We [in Israel] are starting to smell the smoke, but we don't yet see the fire. The volcano is far from us but it exists. It's now in Syria and Iraq, but it's hard to see where it will go."

ISIS' growth caught everyone by surprise, Dichter continued. "The problem is that in the last four years, not even one development in the Arab countries in the Middle East was predicted accurately by any intelligence service.

"When looking at the coming four years, we have more questions than answers," he said. ■

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Female adviser helps women with intimate issues

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

Orthodox women who need to ask the most intimate, sensitive questions about their own bodies no longer need to approach a male rabbi or simply not ask out of embarrassment or modesty. Instead, a new group of highly trained women can advise them privately on the laws of family purity and mikvah use.

Sarah Cheses, trained in Israel as a yoetzet halachah, or adviser in Jewish law, has recently moved to Toronto where she is counselling women on the intricacies of the law.

"Women don't receive sufficient education before they get married," Cheses said. "You have a few classes with a rebbetzin. You don't have time to discuss pregnancy or menopause when you're a new bride."

Women who do not ask questions of rabbinic authorities – and many women are uncomfortable approaching rabbis with these concerns, she said – tend to be more stringent than the Jewish law requires.

"So many times [after giving a class], I've heard, 'I wish I knew that 10 years ago.'"

The types of questions Cheses is asked indicate the pressing need for trained women advisers, she said.

"Several women have called after they have had a miscarriage. More important than even giving them the halachic information was to listen to them, to validate their pain and experiences," she said. "I tell them I've been there before. I know what they're going through."

The mikvah has been a hot-button topic since the arrest last month of Washington, D.C., Rabbi Barry Freundel, charged with six counts of voyeurism after a hidden video camera was discovered in his synagogue's mikvah.

The crisis has filled Cheses' Facebook pages and inbox, as she and other yoetzot grapple with the shocking implications. "Experts have diagnosed it as a trauma for the whole modern Orthodox community," she said.

The charges – Rabbi Freundel has pleaded not guilty – are causing the Orthodox community to examine policies about who has access to mikvahs and how they are run, Cheses said.

But her extensive training focused more on individual women and their own questions. With university degrees in biology and public health, she was well prepared for two years of study at Nishmat in Israel, examining both traditional sources about the laws of family purity and taking classes on women's health, fertility and sexuality.

About 100 women have graduated from Nishmat as yoetzot halachah since the program started in 1999, with the majority practising in Israel. In North America, some graduates have been hired by synagogues to advise women, although Cheses and another yoetzet in Toronto are currently working privately.

Nishmat, which trains yoetzot in Israel and the United States, has been well-accepted by the religious-Zionist community in Israel, because they have made it clear that the women advisers are not intended to supplant rabbis, Cheses said. In North America, about 40 mainstream Orthodox rabbis have endorsed the institution.

Most of the time, the questions the yoetzot field are not "novel," and they have sufficient education and practice to answer the queries. If a situation is unusual, they will turn to a rabbi, she said.

"The goal is not to replace rabbis, it's just to give women a more comfortable address." ■

Sarah Cheses LILA SARICK PHOTO

Sarah Cheses will discuss "In the bedroom and beyond: A Jewish perspective on intimacy" Nov. 9, 1 p.m. For more information, email skleinberg@cfnishmat.org.

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Non-violent extremism needs to be addressed

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Islamic extremism is a "significant problem" in Canada, and it is the non-violent extremists who are the most dangerous, said Tom Quiggin, a member of the Terrorism and Security Experts of Canada Network who was at Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto Oct. 28 to address the issue of home-grown terror.

"Non-violent extremists are the people who bring you the concept of Islamophobia, who put a chill on the issue of multiculturalism. Those are the people undermining the foundation of your house while they're talking to you," Quiggin said.

"One day your house will collapse and you'll look around and say, 'How did that happen?' You realize it wasn't the guy with the bomb who got you, it was the guy with the ideology that undermined your culture and faith."

The event, moderated by David Nitkin, president of EthicScan Canada, a consulting and educational centre on ethical practices, and co-hosted by Beth Tikvah's Rabbi Jarrod Grover, attracted about 100 people who were concerned about the impact Islamic extremism could have on Canadian society if left unchecked.

Although many people are expressing shock about the recent attacks in Ottawa and Quebec on Canadian soldiers, Quiggin said these attacks were a long time coming.

The "Toronto 18," a group of Canadians who planned to detonate truck bombs in Toronto and kidnap the prime minister in an Al Qaeda-inspired plot in 2006, "was the first indicator and warning that something was wrong in Canada, that folks who live here are advocating blowing up stuff in Canada," he said.

"Now we are at a point where we are seeing that violent extremism is not only being advocated here, but being practised here. Unfortunately, I think this is a trend we're looking at."

He said while there have been a number of terrorist plots in Canada over the years that were thwarted by national security, the non-violent extremism, which is creating a "conveyer belt system" to radicalize Canadian youth is not being examined as hard as it should be.

Tom Quiggin, centre, spoke at Beth Tikvah last week. With him is David Nitkin, left, and Rabbi Jarrod Grover.

> *"Now we are at a point where we are seeing that violent extremism is not only being advocated here, but being practised here.*

"In Canada, there has been a conveyer belt system developed where young people are brought in, their heads are filled with silly thoughts, and they are put on this conveyer belt to radicalization and eventually to extremism. Most of the folks doing this in Canada are not stupid enough to put a gun in their hands and tell them to go. But what they do is... they create this idea that you should be a martyr, you should sacrifice your life for whatever cause."

The good news, Quiggin said, is that the Canadian government has begun to address the issue of non-violent extremists who have been operating charities that fund terrorist organizations.

For example, the International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy (IRFAN), which was established to fund Hamas and raised about $14 million between 2004 and 2009, lost its charitable status in 2011.

"CIBC closed their accounts in 2013, the RCMP raided their premises this year, and the government declared them a terrorist entity," Quiggin said.

The Islamic Society of North America Development Foundation, another organization built by the Muslim Brotherhood, lost its charitable status in 2013, for funding terrorism.

However, Quiggin warned, the response to Islamic extremism needs to be tougher.

"We have a whole bunch of fuzzy-headed, muddle-brained academics, journalists and so-called intelligentsia who say that we have to accept the fact that all cultures are equal... I don't think people who advocate female genital mutilation is a good thing. I think there is something wrong with their culture and I believe it is inferior to ours," Quiggin said.

"We have to challenge the narrative that says we must respect all cultures. The hell we do. If someone advocates mutilating their nine-year-old daughter, sorry, I'm against it... We need to start calling those people out and say what they're advocating is bad. It is against the charter, against the Constitution."

He said in his experience with members of the Muslim community, they are also disturbed by the current trends, but feel helpless to stop it.

"By and large, most of them hate this stuff. They just put their hands over their ears and wish it would go away because most of them left over there to come over here to get away from that crap," Quiggin said.

"They're afraid of speaking out in their own community for fear of getting their windows smashed, or being shunned by the community, and they are also afraid of the fact that the Canadian government won't pick it up and follow them... They want a champion. They are looking for someone to lead them and say we have got to get away from these idiots." ■

COMMENTARY

Remembering an angel of the battlefield

Bernie Farber

With Remembrance Day just around the corner it behooves us to recall those within our own community who served with great courage during World War II. Heroes came in all shapes and sizes, and not all carried guns or flew Spitfires.

Those who were part of the Canadian Field Ambulance Service are a fine example. Very often these angels of the battlefield undertook to administer to the medical needs of those wounded in action, dressing injuries and evacuating soldiers from the field of battle very often at risk of their own lives.

Pte. Harold "Red" Fromstein served with the Black Watch, Canada's oldest Highland Regiment. Established in 1862 the Black Watch, out of Montreal where it still has its headquarters today, served gallantly in battles from the time of the Fenian raids in 1866 through to world wars I and II and even in modern time where it saw action in Afghanistan.

Born in Toronto, Pte. Fromstein moved as a young teenager with his family to Montreal. He and his brothers Lou and Albert were well known for their athletic abilities and were active with the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) there. When war broke out in 1939, the three brothers, like more than 17,000 other young Canadian Jews (fully 20 per cent of the entire Canadian male Jewish population of the time), enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces; Lou with the Canadian First Army, Albert with the RCAF and Harold with the Royal Highland Regiment of the Black Watch.

Pte. Fromstein was only 17 years old when he enlisted in August 1940 but so anxious was he to see action that he used his older brother's name and papers to enlist.

He saw much action as a stretcher-bearer with his rifle company. In fact in July 1944 while serving in France he suffered bullet and fragment wounds. He was treated in a French medical unit within Nazi held territory and had to remain in hiding till the American troops captured the area.

A few months later, in February 1945, Pte. Fromstein found himself in what was probably one of the fiercest battles near the end of the war, the Battle of the Hochwald Gap in Germany. It was an immense tank battle where the German forces were now fighting a defensive war for their very survival. Though they knew the war was lost they were going to make the allies fight for every inch of the "Fatherland".

Pte. Harold Fromstein CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO

At one point during this ferocious clash, a number of Canadian tanks and a large part of a rifle company were trapped and came under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. There were many casualties and movement forward was almost impossible.

Pte. Fromstein understood what he had to do. Oblivious to the gun and mortar fire, he scurried over to the wounded tending to their injuries.

Many had to be evacuated and it was up to Pte. Fromstein to make that happen. Disregarding his own safety, he organized the provision of stretchers to evacuate the gravely wounded. The tortuous path to safety extended over a mile of gun-infested trails and mortar fire. The heroic actions of Pte. Fromstein undoubtedly saved their lives.

As a result of his extreme courage under unspeakable battle conditions, he was awarded the Military Medal on June 5 1945.

The citation read in part: "This soldier's exceptionally courageous acts, which were far in excess of his normal duty, definitely saved the lives of several of his comrades and not only earned him the admiration and respect of all ranks of his company but assisted greatly in maintaining the morale of his comrades at fighting pitch."

Canadian Jews fought courageously for their country in large numbers. Pte. Harold "Red" Fromstein was among the 1,971 Canadian Jewish soldiers to receive military honours, more than 10 per cent of the entire Canadian Jewish fighting force. ■

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GUEST VOICE

One of 'The Greatest Generation'

Ralph Levenstein

My father was part of what Tom Brokaw called in his 1999 book of the same name, "The Greatest Generation." These were the men and women who victoriously fought in World War II, then returned home and, in Brokaw's words, "began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted."

Robert Levenstein (everyone called him Bob) had a relatively short military career. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in March of 1943 and after training in Vancouver, Saskatoon and Portage La Prairie, Man., he went overseas in May 1944. He became a navigator and was posted to a Lancaster bomber squadron at the end of February 1945.

Dad's first operational flight came on March 22 , but the most eventful mission of his war came just two days later. On the day of the massive Allied crossing of the Rhine, Dad's plane was hit by enemy flack and lost an engine but managed to land safely in friendly territory. The pilot, Ben Jensen, was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross while crew member, Frank Ridley, received a Distinguished Flying Medal for his efforts with the onboard fire.

Enemy fighters attacked Dad's Lancaster six times during a daylight bombing raid on Hamburg, but caused no damage. Four more night missions followed before VE-Day on May 8. Dad's war ended with trips to bring back released prisoners of war, plus bomb disposal jobs before he returned to Canada in February 1946. The former Second Class Warrant Officer became a chartered accountant, married and raised a family and lived a busy and worthy life in his native Winnipeg until his passing in 2008.

In short, Dad's military career was (compared to many others) relatively uneventful. Unlike his two crew mates, he did not win any special decorations. He was not part of such epic Canadian military operations as D-Day or the liberation of the Netherlands. He was just one of many hundreds of thousands of soldiers and airmen from so many countries who did their part, no matter how large or small, to rid the world of a great menace.

Fortunately, Dad came out of this youthful experience (he was only 21 when the war ended) pretty much unscathed mentally and physically. He enjoyed talking about his experiences and became a member of both the Wartime Pilots and Observers Association and the Royal Canadian Legion. He also made a number of visits with family members to the rebuilt Lancaster bomber at the Canadian Warplane Museum in Hamilton. None of us could quite believe anyone could fit into that small cockpit!

But it was only with his passing that I began to see how important Dad's military service was. This hit home at the cemetery in Winnipeg when members of his Legion branch requested permission to play a recording of *The Last Post*. I still remember reacting very differently to those trumpet notes than any other time I had heard them. I also felt it was important to obtain his military service record from Library and Archives Canada and ensuring I had ready access to Dad's brief written sketch of his military career which forms the basis of these words I write, along with a videotaped interview he also sat for.

Therefore, it was with huge pride that I applied for, and received, the special

Robert Levenstein

bar the Canadian government issued a few years ago for members of Bomber Command. And I will be feeling the same pride when, along with other members of the family, I will attend the annual Nov. 11 ceremony to honour Dad's addition to the Jewish War Veterans Memorial at the Toronto UJA Federation's Sherman Campus.

Dad did not run around seeking such recognition during his lifetime, but I know he would also be proud that he and his heroic effort won't be forgotten. ■

Ralph Levenstein is a former broadcast journalist who lives in Thornhill, Ont.

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Jewish 'lost soldier' to be honoured by Harbord Collegiate

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One of the three fallen soldiers whose names are being added to the Harbord Collegiate monument that stands in front of the school this Remembrance Day is Jewish.

Lieut. Myer Tutzer Cohen, who died at age 22 fighting in World War I, in the 1917 battle of Passchendaele, has been dubbed a "lost soldier" by members of the Harbord Club, the school's alumni organization, which has for years worked to honour alumni of the downtown Toronto high school who lost their lives fighting in either of the two world wars.

Cohen, who served as a lieutenant with the 42nd Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada, was posthumously awarded a prestigious Military Cross and praised for attacking and destroying enemy patrols and capturing enemy prisoners on the front of Mericourt in France.

Born in Toronto, the third of five children to Moses Mark Cohen from New York and Anna Goslar, from Germany, Cohen attended Holy Blossom Temple and celebrated his bar mitzvah there.

Shortly after his death, he was honoured in a sermon given by the congregation's spiritual leader at the time, Rabbi Solomon Jacobs, who said: "Myer was born and bred in this congregation. It was within these walls he was accustomed to worship from childhood... we remember him well – the bright, winsome lad, merry in disposition... anxious to fight the battle of life and win for himself a good name."

Harbord Collegiate, which opened in 1892, had a high proportion of Jewish students right up until the 1960s and has long prided itself on its preservation of history. It unveiled its monument for fallen World War I soldiers in 1921 and a second honouring soldiers from World War II in 2007.

In 1992, the school celebrated its centennial with the inauguration of a museum featuring memorabilia of former students.

Syd Moscoe, a lawyer and Harbord Collegiate alumnus, is chair of the Harbord Club and the de facto archivist of the school's museum. He meets with student volunteers there on a weekly basis to undertake projects connected to the school's history, such as upgrading the Harbord Club website, which features names, photographs and accompanying

Myer Tutzer Cohen

oral histories of alumni who served in the world wars.

"We knew, from whatever information we had, that over 500 students and staff from Harbord Collegiate served in World War I," Moscoe said.

"We only had names of about 460 of them and knew of 75 who had died. Those 75 names are on the war memorial in front of the school. We knew some were missing, but we couldn't just go to Veteran's Affairs and ask, 'Can you give me the names of everyone who went to Harbord Collegiate?' They don't have those kinds of records."

Last fall, the club was contacted by a group called The Black Watch, the oldest highland regiment in Canada, who were known for wearing kilts, who said they knew of a soldier whose name was not on the monument.

Moscoe and the students he works with spoke to the principal and asked to initiate a fundraising project to get Cohen's name added to the monument.

In the midst of doing so, last spring, they were informed of a second "lost soldier" whose name had been left off the monument.

"We called the bronze makers [who were working on the new plaque] and said, 'You'll have to put two names on,'" chuckled Moscoe.

Then, a few weeks later, they were told about a third.

All three soldiers – Cohen, as well as Lieut.-Col. Thomas Craik Irving and Lieut. Walter Howard Curry – will be honoured at the school's public Remembrance Day ceremony on Nov. 11. ■

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Canadian academics look to Israeli innovation models

JORDANNA TENNEBAUM
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, OTTAWA

Canadian academics are drawing inspiration from Israeli research models. Israel's top policy experts and heads of higher learning gathered on Oct. 27 in Ottawa for a three-day conference on innovation.

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) hosted the delegation alongside Canadian university presidents, health-care specialists and technology leaders who together examined Israel's approaches to funding, collaboration and the general will to foster innovation in academic settings.

Tel Aviv University (TAU) president Joseph Klafter addressed the school's endorsement of research on all fronts, some of which accounts for Tel Aviv's status as a high-tech hotbed, second only to San Francisco insofar as innovation goes. "We have a tremendous openness towards audacious and even crazy combinations of ideas and a readiness to climb over all fences in all disciplines," said Klafter.

Among the combinations endorsed by TAU are interdisciplinary studies, merging fields as diverse as film, mathematics, East Asian studies, linguistics and biology. This co-operative take on education is reflected at the faculty level. Currently, the school's Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology is conducting research with 70 groups from over 20 departments.

At Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, collaboration is also prominent. President Rivka Carmi focused on strategies pairing Israeli research with international partnerships. Known as Israel's "start-up university," BGU is involved in academic coalitions with the University of Chicago, Dalhousie University, the University of Michigan and the University of Cincinnati.

BGU students are urged to take part in the school's collaborative culture. Each year, business and engineering students participate in an innovation fair that displays their work. Attendees often include public figures, bankers and potential investors. The event has spurred the development of projects such as the Hydro-Camel, Israel's first autonomous underwater submarine.

For Carmi, such gatherings are as beneficial to students as they are to Israel's top companies. "The students are exposed to the scrutiny of the real world, and the industry is exposed to some very unique and very interesting ideas," Carmi said.

Ruth Arnon

Ruth Arnon, president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, furthered Carmi's sentiments. According to Arnon, students should begin experimenting with entrepreneurship in the fourth grade.

In Canada, leaders in academia are more critical of college and university projects, especially where risk may be involved. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research president Alain Beaudet spoke to this skepticism, which is often a determining factor during the peer review of breakout research.

"Peer reviewers will tend to favour more secure, incremental research rather than going for exciting projects that could hold great potential... they're afraid of making mistakes, so they fund the best bet," he said.

He went on to reference Barry Marshall, who in 1982 discovered that peptic ulcers were caused by a treatable bacterial infection. Although funding bodies initially dismissed Marshall's theory, he later won the 2005 Nobel Prize in physiology. The story illustrates the disconnect between imaginative research and conservative funding, and Beaudet called for greater support of Canadian creativity in the domains of science, technology and innovation.

The AUCC is already moving in this creative direction, in association with Israel. In 2013, it signed a five-year memorandum with Israel's Association of University Heads. The agreement aims to enhance academic partnerships between Canada and Israel in an assortment of sectors, including waste management, medicine, solar power, renewable energy, biotechnology and water technology.

AUCC president Paul Davidson highlighted the importance of timing as Canada continues to deepen its relationships with Israeli universities. "There is tremendous opportunity facing Canada as we return to fiscal surplus and as we engage in the world more broadly," he said. ■

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Hamilton high school features Shoah in genocide exhibit

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

While students often learn about history while visiting a museum, one class at Waterdown District High School created its own.

Members of the school's genocide class created a museum with a collection of artifacts from World War I, World War II and the Holocaust, the Cold War, the Holodomor and Canada's residential schools. It also included displays on 100 years of Canadian armed service (1914-2014) and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

Students researched their topics and the items on display, and they acted as guides for visitors to the museum, which opened Oct. 17 and ran until Oct. 31.

"They can read about history. But I want them to be in touch with history. If they actually see the items, history becomes tangible and palpable," said history teacher Rob Flosman. "If students learn about these items and have to teach about them, they own it. It becomes a part of them."

The museum, which was in a classroom inside the school, was made possible through donations from community members, including one, a Kyu gunto sword, that was taken from a Japanese soldier during combat.

Jay Keller, who lives in Waterdown, which is part of Hamilton, helped liberate Belgium and the Netherlands during World War II. His medals, attendance record and military ID were on display.

Another local resident, Nadia Rosa, donated her yellow Star of David and the ration cards and bank cards she received as a prisoner at Theresienstadt. Rosa, who was born in Czechoslovakia, had been hiding with a Christian family when she was betrayed by the Gestapo.

The military service medals of Edison Kahgee are also on display. Edison, who was born in 1921, lived at a residential school in Brantford, Ont., from age seven to 16. Native children were sent to one of more than 200 schools across Canada to wipe away their culture and convert them to Christianity. Kahgee became a mechanic and a mechanic in the military. He did not receive his medals or compensation until 2004, after he died.

"We learn about genocide, but it's unbelievable that this happened in our own backyard," said student Eric Nanderam, 16.

History teacher Rob Flosman with currency from Operation Bernhard ABIGAIL CUKIER PHOTO

Student Adam Hinckley, a guide for the items in the World War II exhibit, said many visitors were amazed at the weapons, but he was more interested in the Rolls razor given to British troops during the war; the personal letters home; and the canvas gurney that carried wounded and dead soldiers. He marvelled at the British LDV (local defence volunteers) armband and whistle, which gave ordinary citizens the right to defend against German soldiers.

"These items show a side of the war many didn't even know existed," he said. "They show the more human side."

Many artifacts were provided by local resident Madeleine Levy, who is on the advisory board for Facing History and Ourselves Canada. The organization, along with the Toronto District School Board, developed the Grade 11 genocide course, which is now being implemented in many Ontario school boards. Levy also arranged and sponsored the inclusion of the Operation Bernhard exhibit, which is part of a major collection of the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation in Chicago.

Operation Bernhard was a plan that included forcing certain prisoners at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp to make counterfeit British currency. The intention was to devalue the pound and collapse the economy. Counterfeit notes were dropped over Britain by aircraft and also used by spies. ■

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1.5 million Jews fought with Allies in WW II

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The late Sam Cukier, a Polish-born Canadian, served with the Polish and British forces during World War II. The late Cpl. Max Magder, a decorated Canadian soldier, was sent overseas with the Hamilton Light Infantry in 1942 and was severely wounded in France in the summer of 1944.

They were two of the 1.5 million Jews who fought in World War II, and yet, today not enough attention is paid to the contribution of these soldiers, according to historian Derek Penslar, professor of Jewish studies at both the University of Toronto and Oxford University in England.

"Many synagogues today devote a lot of attention to commemorating the death of IDF soldiers, but there is no *Yizkor* for the thousands of Jewish soldiers who died during the Second World War."

Penslar spoke about the participation of Jewish soldiers during World War II Nov. 2 at Temple Emanu-El as part of Holocaust Education Week. Much of his lecture, co-sponsored by Fred and Bryna Steiner, was based on his most recent book, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton University Press 2013).

Penslar stressed that Jewish soldiers in the Soviet Union, the British Empire and the United States were united against a single enemy. "Nazi Germany represented the most destructive enemy ever known to Jews."

He noted that this was a major change from World War I, when Jews fought on opposite sides, depending on their citizenship. "In World War II, there was clearly one side for the Jews."

Penslar said Jews had a high representation among both U.S. and Soviet forces. "Jewish participation in the Allied forces was 10 per cent, which was at a similar rate to that of the non-Jewish majority. Of the 1.5 million Jewish soldiers who fought in the war, one-third, or 500,000, were American and another third, or 500,000, were in the Red Army."

About 100,000 Polish Jews had fought in the Polish army at the beginning of the war. "Many died. Many of them served in the various Polish armies in exile under British or Soviet command."

Jewish partisans also fought in the French resistance, he said. "About 10 per cent of the Free French forces under General [Charles] de Gaulle were Jewish."

Some 20,000 Canadian Jews volunteered to serve, about 10 per cent of the Canadian Jewish population. "That percentage was close to American Jewish participation rates."

Penslar said many U.S. Jews praised the Canadian Jewish soldiers, because they were able to serve overseas from 1939 to 1941. "For American Jewish activists, Canadian Jewish soldiers were a source of pride before the Americans entered the war in 1941."

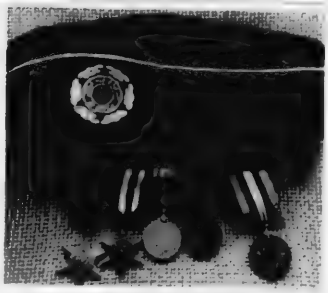
Jews in the Red Army made the biggest sacrifice, because the Soviets lost more soldiers than most of the other Allied countries.

Penslar said Jews in the Soviet military held very high positions, because they had the most technical skills. "In the Red Army Jewish officers were the inventors and engineers... The expertise of the Soviet Jews was unparallelled. There were 10 times the number Soviet Jewish generals and admirals [about 200] than in the U.S. forces."

He said some Jews of eastern European origin were divided – some were Communist and others were Zionist. "The Zionist cause was not universal. Many assimilated Jews were anti-Zionist at the time."

Many left-wing Jews became supporters of the war following the German invasion of Russia in 1941, he said. "Those Jews fought to save socialism. They were no longer conflicted about the fight."

He said some left-wing U.S. Jews weren't anti-Nazi, because Germany was initially allied with the U.S.S.R. "That contradiction was resolved after Germany invaded the Soviet Union."



Cpl. Max Magder's cap and medals.
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

At the outset of the war, the Labor Zionist group led by David Ben-Gurion, head of the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine, began negotiating with the British to set up a Jewish army.

Of the 30,000 Jews who served in the British military, 10,000 helped protect Palestine. In 1944, Britain permitted the formation of the 5,000-strong Jewish Brigade, which fought in the Balkans and Italy, Penslar said. "[The British] thought the Jewish Brigade would help morale and motivate soldiers. They didn't want them to fight for Palestine. They wanted them to fight for British interests." ■

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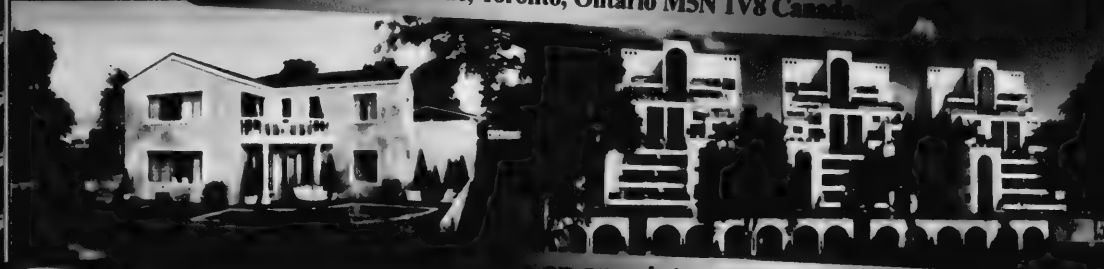

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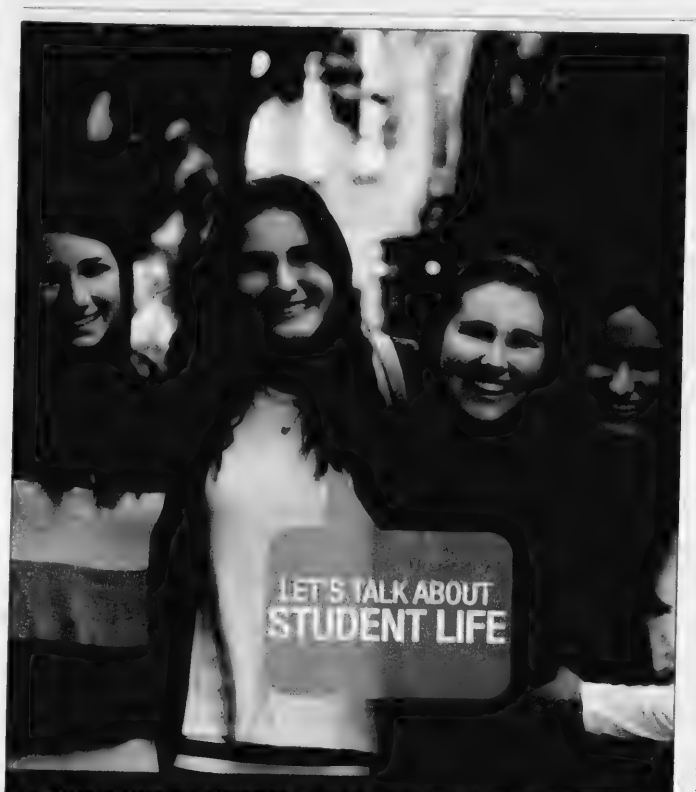

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Opening event looks at collaboration in Hungary

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Author Ayelet Waldman discusses her new book, *Love and Treasure*, with *National Post* writer Ben Kaplan at the HEW opening event.
UJA FEDERATION PHOTO

For years, American author Ayelet Waldman avoided writing about the Holocaust, fearful of broaching the magnitude of the tragedy, of somehow cheapening the horrific events that occurred or of getting things wrong.

The keynote speaker at the opening night presentation of the 34th annual Holocaust Education Week (HEW), held Nov. 2 at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Waldman was featured in conversation with Ben Kaplan, a writer for the *National Post*. She spoke about the process of writing her latest novel, *Love and Treasure* (2014), and her decision to approach the Holocaust from a unique angle.

The event began with opening remarks from CTV reporter Naomi Parness, herself a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, who spoke of the importance of passing on the stories of survivors, particularly as the generation who lived through this period passes away.

Hers were followed by brief remarks from Janet Carding, director and CEO of the ROM, Marilyn Sinclair, chair of the Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre and Doris L. Bergen, the University of Toronto's HEW scholar-in-residence.

Sinclair explained the theme of this year's HEW, which is collaboration.

"We'll be exploring the ways that individuals, groups and governments collaborated during the Holocaust," she said. "Those who worked purposely with the Nazis as well as those who defied them with rescues and righteous acts. We'll be doing this through artists, exhibitions, films and survivor testimonials."

This theme was chosen to mark the 70th anniversary of the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau, on the order of Adolf Eichmann.

Bergen spoke of the collaborative role played by local Hungarian officials, who decided things such as where the Jewish ghettos should be located.

Non-Jewish citizens in Hungary, she said, though not necessarily "foaming at the mouth to see Jews dead," were quick to collaborate when it would benefit them, for example, stealing from them when they were deported.

Waldman's book, which she then sat down to discuss with Kaplan, was a fitting centrepiece for the event, as it deals with the Hungarian Gold Train, a Nazi-operated train that, in 1945, carried a massive stock of valuables stolen from Hungarian Jews from Budapest to Berlin, just as the Russians were encroaching and the Nazis' loss of the war was imminent.

En route, the train was seized by American forces, but with two-thirds of the Hungarian Jewish population murdered, Waldman explained that the question of "who owns this?" came into play.

Fascinated by this history, she said, and by accounts of Hungary's rich Jewish life before the war – both of which Waldman researched extensively in the Budapest Jewish archives and Holocaust museum – she wove a tale centred around the Gold Train, with her three main characters, despite existing in different time periods, unexpectedly bound by a deeply significant piece of jewelry.

Love and Treasure depicts life in Budapest, the capital, both before and after the Holocaust, and in Salzberg, Austria, just as World War II was ending, but the action doesn't directly focus on events during the Holocaust itself. Waldman said she felt she "couldn't write about the Holocaust in terms of portraying ghettos or concentration camps, because I would be committing a crime of exploitation."

Given this worry of not being able to do justice to the atrocities, Waldman said she felt more comfortable exploring the period through the somewhat offbeat perspective of the objects that remain after those who owned them have been wiped out.

"The narrative became about these fragments that remained and their value," she said. "About the transient nature of life versus the permanent nature of objects, and art. This seemed to me such a tragically compelling lens through which to look at the Holocaust."

HEW runs until Nov. 9 and includes more than 150 events in schools, synagogues, churches, community centres and other institutions across the city.

Its sponsors include UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Azrieli Foundation, CTV and the *National Post*. ■

Bystanders are complicit to evil, professor says

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Amos Guiora is advocating for legal sanctions against those who stand by and do nothing in the face of evil.

The Israeli-born professor and co-director of the Center for Global Justice, at the University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College Of Law, was the keynote speaker at the Winnipeg Jewish community's annual Kristallnacht commemoration, held at the Berney Theatre Oct. 26. (Although Kristallnacht took place Nov. 9 and 10 in 1938, the program here was moved up to accommodate Guiora's schedule.) His topic was "The Complicity of the Bystander."

Guiora, the author of numerous books and publications dealing with security, terrorism and the legal basis for counter-terrorist actions, said his current focus is "on the culpability of the bystander through the lens of the law rather than an ethical or moral perspective.

"In the Holocaust, there are three parties involved – the perpetrator, the victim and the bystander," Guiora, himself the son of Holocaust survivors, told the capacity crowd. "The culpable bystander is the one who has the ability to intervene to protect a victim, but doesn't."

He said there are reasons people hesitate to intervene, such as a concern for personal safety or the safety of family members, indifference or perhaps the feeling that someone else will step in.

You can't count on the majority of people doing what is morally or ethically right, he said. That's why it's necessary to pass laws that require bystanders to take action to help someone in distress on pain of facing legal charges if they don't.

While he acknowledged that thousands of gentiles in Nazi-occupied Europe did the right thing and helped hide their Jewish fellow citizens – as shown by Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations designation – millions more, if not actively talking part in attacks on their Jewish neighbours, chose to do nothing.

Guiora described how the Nazis separated German Jews from the larger German society through a series of regulations they began introducing shortly after coming to power in 1933. As a result, Jews were banned from all professions, schools and universities and from owning any farmland. The Nuremberg Laws in 1935 stripped Jews of German citizenship and forbade marriage between Jews and Germans.

The anti-Jewish legislation, Guiora noted, was a prelude to Kristallnacht. The excuse for the nationwide pogrom was the shooting of a German diplomat in Paris by a German-born son of Polish Jews whose parents had recently been deported to Poland.

Over two days, Guiora said, 91 Jews were murdered, more than 1,000 synagogues were burned, more than 7,000 Jewish businesses destroyed or damaged and 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were ransacked.

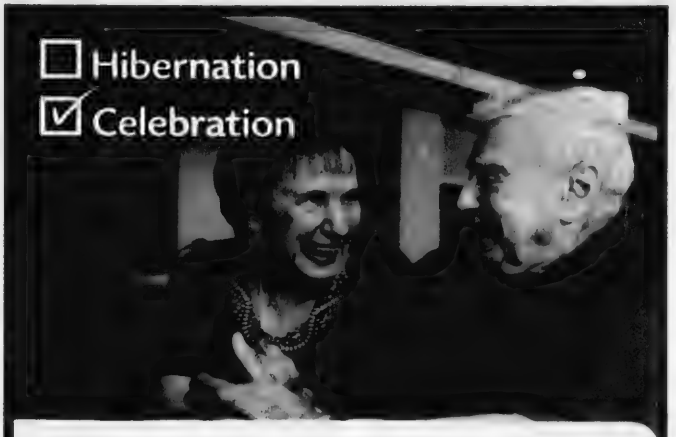
But it wasn't only the majority of Germans who were complicit bystanders in the face of evil, Guiora noted. He also spoke of the lynchings of black men in the American South in the 1920s and '30s and of the large number of spectators who came to watch the hangings.

"People would go to church on Sunday mornings, then go home, pick up their children and their picnic baskets and go to watch the lynching," he noted. "It was a public spectacle."

And he cited an occasion when he failed to intervene when he saw a university student bullying a homeless person. Under his proposed legislation, he said, he would have been charged for standing aside. (He didn't indicate whether the bullying was of the taunting variety or involved violence).

Guiora also spoke of the need to combat cyberbullying and rape on U.S. campuses. ■

Amos Guiora, centre, is flanked by members of General Monash Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion at Winnipeg's Kristallnacht program. MYRON LOVE PHOTO



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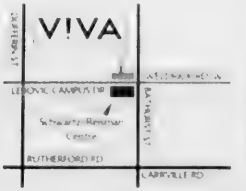

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Sarkozy praises gentiles who saved Jews in WW II

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Nicolas Sarkozy and Yad Vashem official Fran Sonshine. DAVID AMOILS PHOTO

It is, said former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, a story that needs to be told, and standing before the families of those deemed Righteous Among the Nations, he told it.

In the heart of the Nazi era, when Jews were being rounded up and murdered and when many of their neighbours chose not to see what was happening around them, a few particularly brave souls acted heroically to save Jewish lives. In doing so, they harkened to their consciences, acted with supreme courage and "were a glimmer of humanity in the depths of the Nazi darkness," he said.

They showed the greatest of human virtues, he added: courage, fraternity and tolerance. And quoting the Talmud, Sarkozy noted that whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.

Sarkozy delivered a touching and sometime stirring address at last week's True Heroes Gala, sponsored by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. The gala posthumously honoured Ludwik and Monika Koszczyc and Bernhardina and Elizabeth Gertruida van de Pol, who have been named Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem memorial authority in Israel.

Touching many bases, Sarkozy slammed the barbarism of the Nazi era, and using the same term for the recent terrorist attack on Parliament Hill, he criticized that incident as a barbaric attack and an assault on Canadian democracy requiring solidarity among allies.

"We are not entitled to weakness," he said.

With the honorees' families looking on, Sarkozy described how they overcame fear and "recognized in the persecuted Jews their brothers, sisters in the human family."

Speaking through an interpreter, he said "each of their tales is a hymn to life heard tonight."

Earlier, an audience of nearly 1,000 heard how the Koszczyc family, at great risk to their lives, took in six-year-old Samuel Bernan (Misha Kasinski) in the region around Vilnius and saved his life while others in his family were killed. Samuel spent each day hiding behind a stove.

The Van de Pols saved Chava Loopuit Dinner after her parents desperately tried to find someone to take in their daughter in Amsterdam. Her parents were both murdered on the day they arrived in Sobibor, a death camp. Dinner lived in an attic at the van de Pol home in the village of Drogeham in Holland.

Both survivors went on to start families of their own – Bernan in Lithuania and Dinner in Israel, where she had five children, 23 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. Descendants of the Koszczyc family travelled to Toronto from Manitoba for the event, while the van de Pols' family now live in Ontario.

In paying tribute to the rescuers, Sarkozy said they teach us two important lessons. The first is that people always have the choice of what to do. You have the choice to act or to give up, to choose honour over dishonour, to choose courage rather than cowardice, and to choose good versus evil, he said.

The righteous teach another lesson, he continued, of never compromising their values and acting on those values. He slammed those would argue anti-Semitism is an opinion. "It is a disgrace. It is not something to be discussed. It is something to be removed."

Turning to events of the day, he said that "when Jews in France are attacked, it is the republic that is attacked."

Such attacks threaten the unity of the country and attacks on the Jews will eventually spread to attacks on others, he suggested.

Sarkozy rejected the view of some that the Shoah is far in the past and should be forgotten. "To forget would be to commit another crime," he said.

And turning to the Jewish state, he said, "I will forever be a friend of Israel because Israel is the answer to the Shoah."

In addition to honouring the families of Righteous Gentiles, the event served as a major fundraiser for the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, with $2.6 million raised.

Along with the speech by Sarkozy, others addressing the gala audience included Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak, Yad Vashem director general Dorit Novak, Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, as well as dinner co-chairs Ed Sonshine and Fred Waks.

Proceeds raised will go to support the educational and commemorative initiatives of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, including sending Canadian educators to the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. More than 180 educators have already participated in the program. ■

Panel ponders ethical issues in Ebola treatment

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dr. Barry Pakes, left, and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discussed how Jewish law applies to the current scare. JORDAN ADLER PHOTO

In the middle of an Ebola scare that has recently found its way to North America, many Canadians have questions.

For instance, should health-care workers be endangered by going to the front lines and battling the epidemic? Can a government make quarantine mandatory for those suspected to have had close contact with the disease? And, once vaccines and drugs are available, who should get the treatment first?

According to Jewish law, it is the duty of doctors to first treat those who can survive over a long period, meaning the young and the healthy, before those who are sick or elderly.

Of course, bringing religious views to an issue of medical ethics can only spur more debate and discussion. Two public health experts and one noted rabbi came together at Shaarei Shomayim in Toronto on Nov. 2 to discuss how to treat Ebola according to Jewish law.

The public health experts were Dr. Barry Pakes, program director for the Global Health Education Initiative, and Dr. Brian Schwartz, the chief of emergency preparedness at Public Health Ontario.

Joining them was Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner of Toronto's Yeshiva University's Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, who shared halachic insights in response to their questions and concerns.

In theory, those who need the most help to try to cure them should get the vaccine first. Unfortunately, the people who often get treatments to stave off viruses such as the flu are those who can afford it instead of those who need it the most, Pakes said.

However, Rabbi Torczyner said that long-term life is of greater value, meaning those with the better and longer chance of survival must be treated first.

"All life is valuable, but it is not necessarily equal," he said. "One is indeed entitled within Jewish tradition to risk temporary life for the sake of long-term life."

A trickier situation occurs when two patients arrive at a hospital at the same time. Who should the doctor see first? Rabbi Torczyner used halachic teaching to explain that it is also the one whose life has greater value, meaning who will likely live the longest from that day.

Since debate rages on whether a government can impose quarantine time on people returning from West Africa, Schwartz cited how quarantine was often used in Ontario during the SARS outbreak in 2003. However, taking a healthy person off a plane and isolating him or her for weeks infringes on privacy and human liberty, he argued.

"Whatever you do to reduce the spread of an illness has to be proportionate to the threat of the illness," Schwartz said. "You don't take a quarantine and enforce it on everyone who comes back from West Africa, unless there's a good reason."

Schwartz added that there is almost no risk of a Canadian patient getting Ebola in the near future. Since Ebola is not as contagious as some believe – the disease cannot spread through the air like the flu or SARS – the risk is not as high.

The Ebola epidemic that began in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone has already killed nearly 5,000 people. The disease can be spread through bodily contact with fluids such as sweat, tears, saliva and blood.

A major debate comes up when one realizes that many of the people who have died of Ebola are health-care workers. Pakes said two-thirds of Liberia's doctors died in the wake of the disease's outbreak.

It is a commandment within Judaism to help save people's lives and not stand by while someone's blood is shed, Rabbi Torczyner said. However, an argument from Rabbi Akiva sheds a different light.

"You can make the argument that the health-care worker can say, 'My life comes before the patient's life. I'm not going to treat him at risk to myself.'" Rabbi Torczyner said. "The trend among those in Jewish law is to say one should treat as long as the risk is manageable."

In the meantime, no scientifically proven treatments or vaccines are available for Ebola patients. Some of the drugs currently used have not undergone a formal review process to prove their safety or effectiveness.

It may cost more than $1 billion to bring to the market a vaccine to treat Ebola. Vaccines in the pipeline should be ready for testing in 2015. ■

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Rabbi organizes concert for prostate cancer awareness

SHERI SHEFA
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Prostate cancer survivor Rabbi Moshe Meirovich hopes a fundraising concert he is organizing to benefit Prostate Cancer Canada will help raise awareness about the importance of PSA testing.

Rabbi Meirovich's survival story begins in early 2010, when he had returned to Toronto after a seven-year stint serving as a rabbi at a Cincinnati shul.

He went for a routine test to measure his level of prostate-specific antigens (PSA), a protein in the blood that is elevated in men who have prostate cancer.

"I had gone to my urologist and my PSA count was still in the normal range... I didn't see any reason for alarm," he said.

"[But] my urine stream was erratic. I just had a sense that it wasn't 100 per cent the way I was used to."

A few months passed before he decided to go for another PSA test.

When his wife, Dr. Judith Weinroth, an oncologist with 30 years experience, saw his results, she noticed something.

"She noticed that the PSA count, although still in the normal range, had doubled in two years... So she said, 'I'll put you in touch with my colleague, Dr. Robert Nam,' who is head of urology at Sunnybrook [Health Sciences Centre] and I met with him."

Rabbi Meirovich said he was advised to undergo a biopsy, because it's the only way to rule out cancer.

"He took 12 core samples... I wasn't expecting anything... I got a call a week later saying 'The doctor wants to see you.' It turns out that four samples out of the 12 came back cancerous. That was a shock. A real shock," he said.

When he told his doctor that he had an identical twin brother, Rabbi Harvey Meirovich, the doctor urged him to let his brother know that he, too, should be tested.

"He went ahead and had the test done, and it turns out that he also had prostate cancer, and it was even more aggressive than mine."

They both had to undergo surgery, and his brother needed to follow up his surgery with radiation treatment. Both brothers have since recovered.

"Had I not found my cancer, [Harvey] wouldn't have known about it either."

Rabbi Meirovich insists that it was his decision to have his PSA levels regularly tested that saved his life, and he is now advocating that all men in Ontario have access to free PSA testing.

PSA tests for men, which cost about $30, are covered by government health plans in eight out of 10 provinces, but not Ontario.

"We're raising money now for funding so that all men will be able to have the opportunity to get these PSA tests, because we believe that it is a life saver. It is a tool, among many other tools that can help diagnose the potential problems. It needs to be done on a regular basis, usually after the age of 50... to have a baseline reading to see," he said, adding that prostate cancer affects one in seven men in Canada.

"I would never have known if I had this one number – it would have meant nothing had I not already had a number of tests to look back on and [see that the number had risen]."

Rabbi Meirovich hopes his Nov. 19 concert at the Telus Centre for Performance and Learning in Toronto will raise both funds and awareness for the cause.

"When we realized there is an opportunity here to try to raise awareness, we organized an all-male concert, which will have Broadway, theatre, opera, jazz, barbershop quartet, and a choir, to try to raise awareness," said Rabbi Meirovich, who also works as a cantor, and will be performing at the concert along with jazz musicians Ron Davis and JP Saxe.

Rabbis Harvey, left, and Moshe Meirovich

"The concert itself is eclectic. We're trying to be diverse with our program. We have only one liturgical section and the rest is theatre, Broadway, opera, and jazz, to try to get people to enjoy the evening and at the same time, support a worthwhile cause."

For further information or to purchase tickets call 416-408-0208, or visit www.prostatecancerconcert.com. ■

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Baird receives Wiesenthal Center's Award of Valour

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) is known for fighting anti-Semitism, educating for tolerance and supporting the State of Israel, so it should come as no surprise that in a speech in which he accepted the organization's Award of Valour, Foreign Minister John Baird touched all three bases.

During a visit to Amsterdam, Baird said, he took the time to visit the Anne Frank House, the location where Anne, her family and several other Jews hid behind a false wall, hoping to escape the Nazis.

Today it's a museum, but the creak of the wooden floors reminded him of the danger Anne and the others faced every day. Anne and the others were caught not long before liberation, but in walking through the museum, Baird said he came across an interesting item Anne had placed on the wall – a small black-and-white postcard of Jerusalem.

It "gave her comfort," said Baird, and today remains "very powerful." In signing the museum's guest book, he noted the need to fight anti-Semitism in all its forms, and to an audience of about 250 in Toronto at the FSWC's State of the Union Luncheon last week, he said the targeting of the individual Jew by anti-Semites has evolved into targeting the collective Jew, as represented by the State of Israel.

"Anti-Semitism is beginning to pass the dinner-table test," cloaked in references to Zionism and Israel, he said.

In naming Baird as the FSWC's Award of Valour recipient, president and CEO Avi Benlolo commended the minister for supporting Israel, standing against anti-Semitism and showing determination in preserving democracy.

Baird has criticized the UN General Assembly for voting to recognize a Palestinian state. He has also signed the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism and during his tenure, Canada shut the Iranian embassy in Ottawa, Benlolo said.

During his address, Baird noted that the recent terrorist attack in Ottawa has "not shaken our identity or our resolve one iota."

One of the first calls received afterwards by Prime Minister Stephen Harper was from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Baird concluded by noting

Avi Benlolo, left, with John Baird

that Canada and Israel share the values of freedom, human rights and the rule of law.

Supporting Israel is easy, he said. "We feel it in our bones."

Keynote speaker John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, pointed to the attack on Parliament, saying "it's a signal that the war on terror is far from over." He suggested it was an attempt to break the linkage between the United States and its allies in confronting ISIS. "This is not the time for the West to split apart," he said.

Bolton, who served at the UN under former president George W. Bush, suggested the West was losing conviction in its own values. Its opponents sense that.

He said there are people in the United States who would like the country to become less assertive, to withdraw from world affairs, and who feel the world would be better off if U.S. influence lessened. But developments demonstrate the opposite, Bolton said. "It's not our strength that is provocative. It's our weakness that's provocative."

Surveying a number of trouble spots, Bolton said Russia, China, and a number of countries in the Middle East are either asserting themselves in ways detrimental to the West or are descending into chaos. "If you want a strong America, say so," he suggested. "If not, beware of what you get."

Others addressing the FSWC luncheon included Simon Deng, a Sudanese human rights activist, who was once a child slave. Children in Sudan can still be bought for only $10 and despite slavery in that country and millions dead at the hands of the Arab government in Khartoum, "the United Do Nothing Nations" focuses its attention on condemning Israel, he said.

Deng left the stage with an emotional appeal for help for the people of South Sudan. ■

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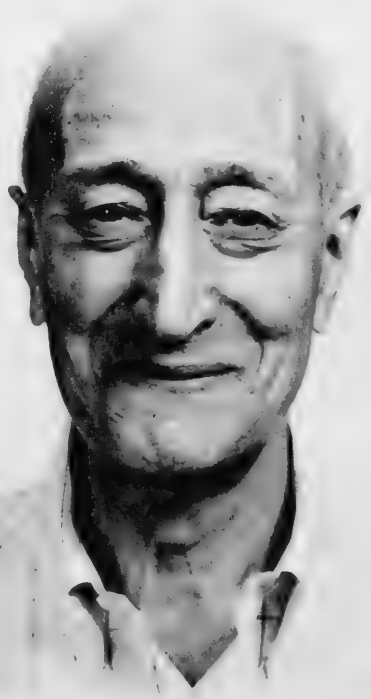

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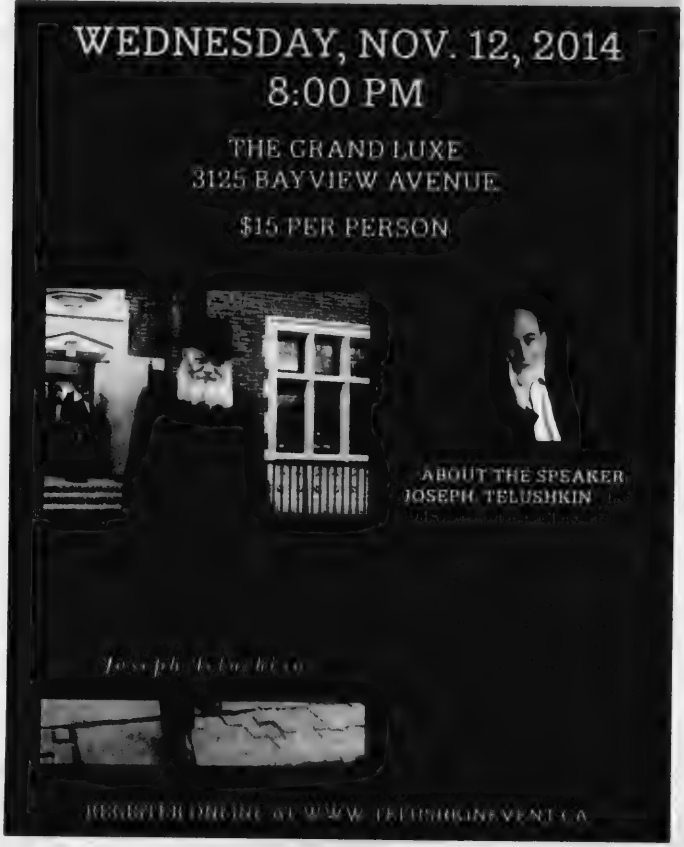

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CHABAD

Go on the offensive, British journalist suggests

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Melanie Phillips

It's hard to win a fight when you're always back-pedalling and on the defensive. Better to step forward and trade blows from your front foot, says British author and commentator Melanie Phillips.

Phillips is certainly no pugilist and likely wouldn't know a jab from a right cross, but in the marketplace of ideas – make that the battleground of ideas – she knows how to give and take a punch.

An award-winning journalist, Phillips believes the government of Israel, its supporters, the Diaspora Jewish community and indeed, all those who value western civilization, must become more aggressive when stating their case.

Too often, she said, Israel is a late arrival to the information war being waged against it. Diaspora Jewish communities, particularly in her native England, are afraid of rocking the boat. And on campuses and elsewhere where Israel is vilified, its supporters are too often reactive, responding to accusations of misdeeds, often delivered by progressive liberals.

Instead, she believes, hit the progressives where they live. You profess to be against racism, she would have you say, yet you support Palestinian leaders who say there will be no Jews in a future Palestine. That's racism.

You favour rights for women and gays, yet you back movements that deny these rights.

You say you are for the rule of law. Israel is a country with a firm foundation in international law. Don't allow anyone to say it is illegal, she argues.

Phillips was in Toronto last week as a guest of Stand With Us Canada, an organization that provides information about Israel. She delivered an address titled "The Loss of Reason Over Israel: the campaign of delegitimization and what to do about it," at Adath Israel Congregation.

In an interview with *The CJN*, Phillips said, "When it comes to defending Israel, going on the front foot is essential. If one is always defending oneself and saying we're not the aggressors... we're doing wonderful things in our hospitals with Arabs, it's hopeless... You're half-way to accepting that they are right because you are arguing on their territory. You are arguing on the grounds they have laid down."

Turning to the situation facing European Jews, Phillips said "European Jews are extremely unsafe" following sometimes violent anti-Jewish demonstrations this past summer. But so, too, are others in the western world.

The demonstrations were "hideous and very frightening," she said.

The ostensibly anti-Israel protests quickly morphed into anti-Jewish incitement. Attacks on British Jews increased by 500 per cent. Phillips criticized the country's political class for not speaking up to counter the anti-Jewish incitement.

A lot of Britain's Jews are coming to realize there is increasingly no place for them in the country, but they haven't begun to leave, as have some French Jews, she added.

Phillips, author of *Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within*, said "What we are facing is what I call Islamo-fascism which is being allowed to take root and become more extreme and visible, without any serious attempt to stop it."

Shariah law is encroaching on public life in Britain, causing a fundamental tenet of equal application of the law to be jettisoned, a situation that is tragic for millions of Muslims who moved there to live free of fear and tyranny and adopt the values of the West.

The people who seek a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam "are in the ascendant," she said.

Asked about the Rotherham scandal, in which at least 1,400 children were sexually assaulted from 1997 to 2013 by gangs of British-Pakistani men, Phillips said political correctness and contempt for the victims allowed the abuse to continue.

Police knew about it, but regarded the victims as "white trash" meriting no protection. That attitude coincided with a politically correct view among police and city council that refused to acknowledge the problem, "as it involved brown-skinned men, and to confront it would leave them vulnerable to being called racist," she said.

"And so you had this dreadful thing in which you had these thousands of children whose plight was ignored," she added. ■

Musical event to honour teen who died of cancer

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Teenagers throughout Ontario have been bursting into song with the hope of performing live on the same stage as Billboard Hot 100 singer/songwriter Andy Grammer.

In memory of Olivia Wise, the Liv Wise Foundation has created the inaugural *Liv, Love & Lyrics* event celebrating Wise's passion for music and singing. It will be held Nov. 30 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts' George Weston Recital Hall.

On Nov. 25, 2013, the world lost an inspirational 16-year-old beautiful soul when Wise passed away from an inoperable brain tumour. Her confidence, courage, love, and lyrics gained worldwide attention when her heartwarming, inspiring rendition of Katy Perry's hit song *Roar* went viral on YouTube, with 3.4 million hits to date.

Three talented winners of a YouTube-based talent competition will open the show as a tribute to Wise.

"It is so hard for me to believe that it's been a year since Olivia went into the studio to record *Roar* and that this November will be a year since she lost her battle to brain cancer and I began my battle to live without her," said her mom, Kari Winemaker, co-founder and director of the Liv Wise Foundation.

"We must lean on Olivia's legacy and work together to make a difference in the lives of children and families who are suffering with brain cancer today or will be tomorrow," she said.

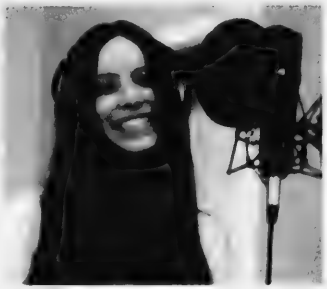
The contest was open to Ontario residents ages 13 to 17 throughout the month of October. Participants had to submit a one- to four-minute video performing a song with their choice of a backing track or their own accompaniment.

A panel of three renowned judges in the music world – Jake Gold, Michelle Newman and Elaine Overholt – have scaled down the numerous submissions to six semi-finalists, whose videos have been posted to the Liv Wise YouTube channel, where the public will judge the performances.

"We have received so many amazing videos with talent that it's blowing me away," said Newman, owner and voice coach at Michelle Newman Music, before the six semifinalists were chosen.

Gold, CEO of the Management Trust, said he'll "know [a good performance] when I see it. This is how I have always assessed anything that I do in the music world. I go strictly on my gut feeling – how it makes me feel."

"I am looking for someone who has a real passion. You can see that right away," Newman added.



Olivia Wise

Three winners will be announced Nov. 6 based on number of views and likes.

"The winners will have to blast it out to their friends and family. The three that have the most votes, shares and likes will be the winning three that open the show for Andy Grammer at the *Liv, Love & Lyrics* event," said Michele Lenick, owner of Bash Events.

Newman will be offering her vocal coaching for the day to the three winners in order to prepare, train, and work on vocal exercises to ensure the right sound.

The Liv Wise Foundation's mission is to bring hope and happiness to children and families suffering from brain cancer.

The proceeds of the event will be donated to the Dr. Jay Children's Grief Program that provides support and education to children and their families when a significant person in their life is dying, or has died.

The program provided grief counselling to the Wise family both before and after Olivia's passing.

"The Dr. Jay team of experienced, caring and dedicated grief counsellors has held our hands in a way that truly encouraged and supported us to cope with our extreme heartbreak, our fears, and the loss we were facing," Winemaker said.

"Our grief counsellor was willing to come to our home weekly to sit with each of Olivia's siblings and then with myself and my husband. It was something we grew to look forward to.

"All of us at the Liv Wise Foundation want other children and their families to be able to benefit from the amazing gift of healing which The Dr. Jay Children's Grief Program has to offer. We hope that by giving our full support and raising money for it, we can help to ensure that all grieving children and their families will be able to receive the free grief counselling that they need," she said. ■

Ticket prices range from $70 to $170 and are available from ticketmaster.ca. To learn more, visit livwisefund.com.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 6, 2014

Mentors teach TanenbaumCHAT students about leadership

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Are leaders made or born? And what makes an exceptional leader?

More than 100 eager high school students from the Anne and Max Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto hoped to find out by taking part in the second annual SOLE Student Leadership Conference, held Oct. 27 at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre.

SOLE stands for Self-Organized-Learning Environment, a personalized and collaborative student-driven education initiative where students listen to speakers who give them practical tools they can apply to their school clubs or committees.

"My goal with SOLE was to give students real tools to come up with a step-by-step plan and an easy-to-follow strategy, envisioning the ideas of branding and thinking differently," said English teacher Jamie Cohen, the creator of SOLE and co-director of student activities at TanenbaumCHAT's Kimel Campus in Vaughan.

The students received wide-ranging expert advice, leadership skills and community-building training from Jewish community mentors such as alumnus and university student David Kornhouser, and Meri Har-Gil, life coach and co-author of *Rise of the New Professional*.

Other mentors included Mark Bowden, a human behaviour and body language expert; Greg De Koker, a branding expert and author of the book *Brand: It ain't the logo*(*It's what people think of you)*; magician Dan Trommater; and, via Skype from Los Angeles, Bart Baggett, a social media marketing expert.

They also heard from Tandie Maughn, a health and nutrition expert, and life coach Glendale Reyes, founder of Hip Hop Helps.

Each presenter had a particular lesson to share, such as how to create a compelling vision, develop innovative ideas in a collaborative setting, build a step-by-step plan to follow through on team goals, communicate a message as a professional presenter and raise people's levels of confidence, energy, and resilience.

Trommater, the magician, used optical illusions to help students think about how to shift perspective, think differently and conjure up their own awe-inspiring ideas for a club, committee or community-building project.

Teacher Jamie Cohen with students Justin Veiner, Jonathan Stoll, Cole Nefsky and Griffin Hanratty. SUSAN MINUK PHOTO

"Through the tool of magic, we can challenge assumptions and inspire new ways of thinking. Your perspective is the No. 1 factor in your success," he told them.

Bowden demonstrated how the students could use non-verbal communication skills to present their ideas or deliver a speech, citing the importance of hand-positioning, friendly eye contact and walking around a room with a smile.

"Smiling is universal. Everybody on the planet smiles in the same way. It doesn't matter what culture you are from. It's a signal meaning 'I like you,'" he said.

The students had an opportunity to meet the mentors in groups and get immediate feedback on their plans for their clubs, committees, events and projects.

The afternoon session focused on inclusive leadership through community-building and was facilitated by TanenbaumCHAT teacher and former IDF soldier Shimon Weiss. Speakers included Rabbi Daniel Korobkin of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto and Nick Maes, assistant head of history at the school.

Rabbi Korobkin shared several stories from the Torah about different models of Jewish leadership. He discussed the quality of being able to see the good within people, despite the fact there can also be ugliness.

"If you look for ugliness, you will find it. If you look for beauty, you will find it. A famous saying of our sages tells us that if you look out into the world and you see ugliness, you really are just seeing a reflection of that which is within yourself," he said.

"If you see beauty, then you are looking at the beauty that is within yourself." ■

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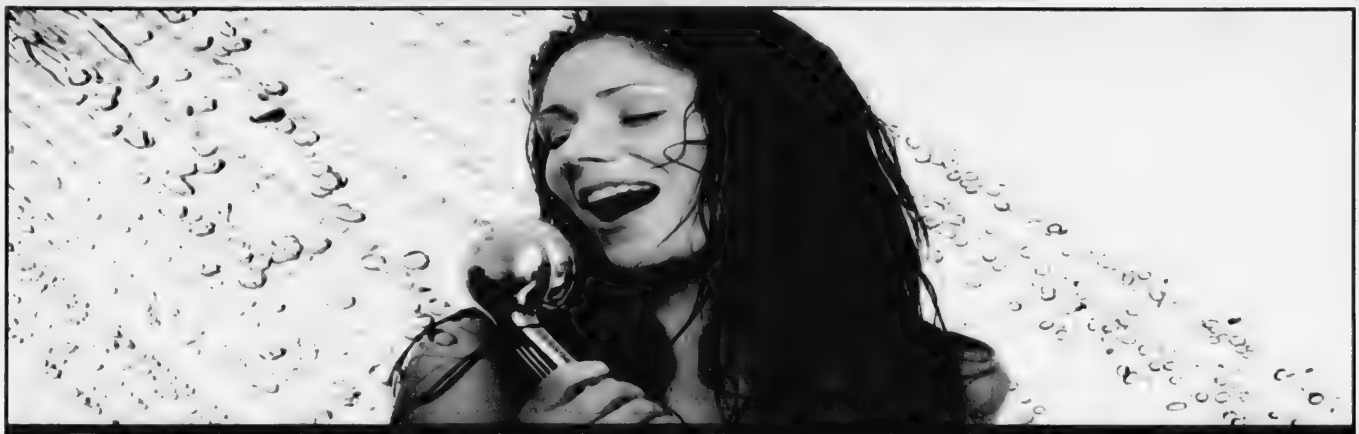

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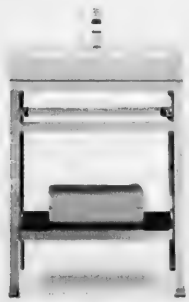

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COUNTERPOINT

Allegations against CMAJ article completely unfounded

Michael Gordon

A recent column in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ), penned by deputy editor Dr. Matthew Stanbrook, explored a proposal by Gazan physician Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, currently a faculty member at the University of Toronto, to bring 100 Gazan children wounded during the recent conflict to Canada for medical treatment. Abuelaish has been a passionate spokesperson for the suffering of the children of Gaza, focusing on the medical results of war.

Responding recently in *The CJN*, Mike Fegelman of Honest Reporting Canada charged Stanbrook with singling out Gazan children for politically motivated reasons ("Medical Journal Engages in Crass Anti-Israel Propaganda", Oct. 15). Fegelman accused Stanbrook of only "obliquely" referring to Israeli casualties and ignoring the psychological trauma to Israeli children. He lambasted Stanbrook for not cataloguing the fault lines in the Israeli-Gaza conflict and for ignoring the Hamas atrocities while singling Israel out as the evil perpetrator.

These would be serious allegations, except that they are completely unfounded.

In fact, Stanbrook, in his *CMAJ* piece, made the point strongly that the proposal of treating 100 Gazan children in Canada did not diminish the needs and anguish of children from other jurisdictions. Further, he explicitly and by number, recounted the deaths and injuries to Israelis and the trauma to children in both Israel and Gaza this past summer. Stanbrook did not attempt to justify one way or another the fault lines in the conflict but rather focused on the tragedies of war-injured children and the duty to help them, as Canada has done in the past for others who suffered the ravages of war and displacement.

Stanbrook's editorial was a highly balanced piece of journalism that excelled in even-handedness and lack of bias. Fegelman, meanwhile, engaged in dishonest reporting.

Recently, the *Lancet*, a prominent medical journal of international repute and readership, became the centre of a controversy. There is little doubt *Lancet* editors overstepped their mandate and breached their editorial responsibilities when they published a greatly biased letter addressed to the people of Gaza. The *Lancet* letter made unfounded allegations and levelled unsubstantiated accusations against Israel, and against Jewish doctors in Israel and the Diaspora.

Perhaps that ugly incident motivated Fegelman to closely scrutinize the *CMAJ* for fear that it, too, was engaging in low-level journalistic tactics in a supposed attack against Israel. As a Jewish member of the Canadian Medical Association, which publishes the *CMAJ*, I am very sensitive to writings that challenge the boundaries between medical reporting and politics, and this is especially true when the politics relates directly or indirectly to Israel. Stanbrook's commentary did not even come close to crossing that line.

Fegelman and Honest Reporting-Canada – an organization distinct from the Israel-based HonestReporting.com – have a moral duty to be scrupulously honest in how they represent the content of Canadian journalism. They must be careful about ascribing motive when it comes to Canadian journalists. It is crucial that their reporting and opinions do not undermine the validity of quality criticism even as they pursue their mandate of revealing meritless anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiments hidden in the guise of journalistic opinion pieces.

Fegelman has fallen far short of ethical journalistic standards in his critique of Stanbrook's *CMAJ* article. To my mind, Fegelman does much damage when he engages in the type of unfounded criticism that filled his *CJN* piece, and he taints his organization by using its mandate inappropriately to wreak criticism where there is no foundation for it.

We all depend on Honest Reporting-Canada to take enormous care when criticizing other writers. If they fail in this effort, they fail their readers, and they abrogate their responsibility to present reliable, robust and well-researched criticism. For that reason, Honest Reporting-Canada should apologize to Stanbrook. ■

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MukiBaum gala to raise money for new day program

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The MukiBaum Accessibility Foundation is holding its first fundraising gala, the Wonders of Ability, at York Mills Gallery, Nov. 9.

MukiBaum is a non-governmental organization that was established in 2011 to provide inclusive, community-centred support to children and adults with autism and other complex disabilities.

Though the bulk of its programs, both those for kids and adults, are held during after-school hours, the gala will raise money for a new adult day program that Mukibaum will launch in several weeks.

Since last December, MukiBaum has been running a host of programs for over 100 individuals with disabilities and their families out of a new facility located at 401 Magnetic Dr.

The programs, some of which have been initiated by clients, are highly individualized, and include diverse therapy modalities like art, drama, yoga and music therapies, as well as the use of sensory and virtual reality tools. All are designed to offer clients opportunities for skills-development and social nourishment.

MukiBaum's treatment centre serves both children and adults. MUKIBAUM ACCESSIBILITY FOUNDATION

Unlike most government programs, MukiBaum Foundation doesn't require a formal disability diagnosis as a precondition of participation, though Talia Keter, MukiBaum's senior co-ordinator of fundraising, public relations and programming, said many clients have autism, developmental disabilities, cerebral palsy or mental health disorders like schizophrenia.

"Our philosophy is that it doesn't matter what disability someone has, they are still a person like you and me," explained Dror Enbar, the organization's programming manager. "But maybe someone can't communicate like you and me can. They may have different challenges, and we want to offer them options so they can communicate and get to a point where people see their abilities, not their disabilities."

MukiBaum's outreach activities include a monthly girls' club and the Family Community Outreach Program, which allows clients' whole families to get together over a handful of Sundays to socialize and test out the facility's various resources.

Because MukiBaum receives no funding from the government – indeed, a number of the families that use its services do so while they're on lengthy wait lists for government programs – it is entirely reliant on private donations.

"That's why we're doing this gala," Keter said. "We're hoping people will open their hearts."

The gala will feature dinner, a silent auction, dancing and live musical performances. The theme, Through the Looking Glass, is meant to emphasize individuals' unique abilities, rather than their challenges.

"We want you to see, yes, this person may have autism, but he's also a really good painter, a good cook, or really great with his siblings," Keter said. "We want people to look through the looking glass and see how much more this person has to offer."

About 200 people are expected to attend. Tickets are still available, and can be purchased online at www.mukibaumfoundation.com. Donations can also be made online. ■

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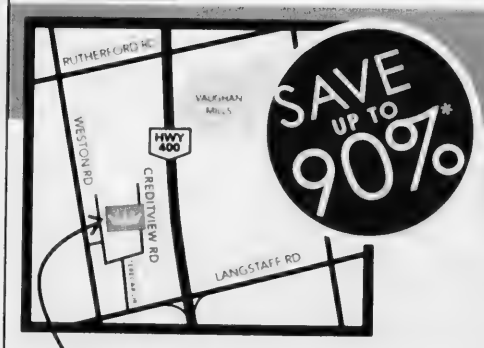

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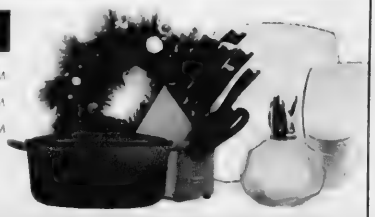

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 6, 2014

Baycrest website gives information on late-life depression

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Having battled depression for most of her life and survived a suicide attempt three years ago, Evelyn Burns-Weinrib understands the importance of raising awareness about late-life depression.

"I want to reach the public to let them know that there is help... I want to inspire people not to be afraid to admit [they suffer from depression] because it is serious and it can be helped," Burns-Weinrib said.

A mental health website that was launched earlier this year by the Centre for Mental Health at Baycrest and partly funded by Burns-Weinrib aims to inform and help people suffering from late-life depression.

Burns-Weinrib, 81, said she suffered from her first bout of depression when her family moved from downtown Toronto to Forest Hill when she was 14.

"I did not fit [in]. I was not a Jewish American Princess, know what I mean?... My grades started to drop... Home was a problem. My dad was depressed. I knew this," she said, adding that depression runs in her family and her father took his own life when he was 82.

"I wanted to get out, so I got married at 17. The following year I had a baby at 18. I know now that I had post-partum depression. My friends were in high school, university, and I was not happy."

Dr. Rob Madan and Evelyn Burns-Weinrib BAYCREST PHOTO

She said she knew she would never be content as a stay-at-home mom, so she started to volunteer at Mount Sinai Hospital and worked at a retail store, but nothing changed until it occurred to her that she was her happiest when she was in school.

At 28, she completed her high school studies, went off to teachers college, and spent the next 35 years of her life as a teacher.

"That saved my life," she said.

After being forced to retire from her teaching career at 65, Burns-Weinrib began volunteering again.

For the past 13 years, she's been volunteering at Baycrest, currently spending six days a week working the cash register at a café in the long-term care centre, spending time with patients in palliative care, and giving lectures for the residents.

She said a couple years after the death of her second husband, she developed neuropathy, a disease that affects the nerves in her legs. Walking became difficult, and she knew she had to give up her beloved dog, Angel.

"When I saw what happens to people [when they age and become ill]... I didn't want to be old like that and be incapacitated and need help at home," she said.

So when she was 77, she began a year-long plan to commit suicide.

"This was not a rash decision to go to bed one night and take my pills. I planned it, gave everything away. I have no jewelry, I have nothing. I gave it all away," she said.

"It was a Thursday night. I had my pills and my liquor... and a plastic bag."

But the next morning, she found herself in a hospital bed with a guard by her side.

"I was very angry that I was still there... I didn't want to live."

Following her recovery, when Burns-Weinrib began sharing her story about her depression and attempted suicide, many people questioned whether she should be sharing those personal details.

"I said, 'I'm not going to lie. This is too important...' Some people lose so much – they lose their mobility, they lose their family, they lose their jobs – how many losses can you take before life becomes worthless? That's when you've got to find a way to compensate for that feeling."

Burns-Weinrib and Baycrest's chief of psychiatry, Dr. Robert Madan, hope that the new mental health website (www.baycrest.org/mentalhealth), a multi-media resource for both sufferers and their families, will serve as a resource for people like her.

"After looking on the Internet to see what kinds of resources there were, I didn't see any resources that had a lot of in-depth educational materials for patients and caregivers or families about geriatric mental health disorders – certainly not for depression," Madan said.

"I wanted to do something different than what was already out there."

Madan explained that late-life depression is more common than most people realize.

"The rates of suicide are highest in older adult males. Stats Canada shows that the highest rate is between the ages of 85 and 89 for males – it's the highest in the country... It has a major impact on people, on their families," he said.

"There are people who are older who have never had depression, who've dealt with immigration, bankruptcy, divorce, all sorts of issues, and they only get depressed later on in life."

He added that in the so-called "golden years," depression can be triggered by major life changes including retirement, loss of loved ones, and sometimes, financial problems.

"People need to know that being depressed in late life is not normal. It's a myth. It's not normal to feel that way," Madan said.

"People can develop thoughts of wishing for death – that's beyond feeling down about something. It can go on for many, many weeks and people are distressed and stop functioning socially, or people stop going to their activities, or their hobbies, not enjoying their grandchildren or their family – those are clear signs of depression, so that's how it is very different. If left untreated, it is very significant."

Madan said he hopes that in addition to providing the elderly community with information and resources, the website will help reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues.

"We want people to know that you don't need to suffer in silence. If you have an illness, you should seek treatment the way you would with any other illness, so that is one of the big messages we want to provide." ■

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Netanyahu criticized as being risk averse

BEN SALES
JTA, JERUSALEM

An anonymous White House staffer apparently isn't the only one who thinks Benjamin Netanyahu is shy about taking chances.

A piece last week in the *Atlantic* magazine by journalist Jeffrey Goldberg ignited a firestorm with its revelation that an Obama administration official had called the Israeli prime minister "a coward" and "chickenshit." But on Netanyahu's home turf, Israeli political leaders also have criticized him as risk averse and focused solely on his political survival.

Politicians on the Israeli right have called Netanyahu soft on defence. Those on the other end of the political spectrum have described him as inflexible and insincere on Israeli-Palestinian peace. Rivals deride him as overly focused on maintaining power.

Israeli Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, chairman of the far-right Jewish Home party and Netanyahu's coalition partner, demanded Oct. 28 that the Obama administration "immediately reject these gross comments." (U.S. Secretary of State has since apologized to him). But at the end of Israel's recent war in Gaza, it was Bennett himself who implicitly criticized Netanyahu as hesitant in fighting Hamas.

"When you want to beat a terror organization, you defeat it," he said Aug. 19. "When you hold negotiations with a terror organization, you get more terror."

Meanwhile, the Obama administration's "red-hot" anger over Netanyahu's settlement policies described in Goldberg's piece is shared with Israeli political leaders to the left of the prime minister. Finance Minister Yair Lapid of the centrist Yesh Atid party earlier this week said that plans to expand settlements "will lead to a serious crisis in Israel-U.S. relations and will harm Israel's standing in the world."

Benjamin Netanyahu

> *The Israeli public may grumble, but they think he's far and away the best option there is out there.*

And Netanyahu's main rival, opposition leader Isaac Herzog, delivered a withering 13-minute tirade against the prime minister Oct. 28 from the Knesset floor that contained many of the same criticisms as the U.S. officials' comments.

"There's a nation here that desires life, and its life is more important than your political survival," said Herzog, chairman of the Labor party. "Six years in a row you've held your position. Six full years. And what have you brought? How have you fulfilled your promise? Nothing. There's nothing. Not peace, not security, not economy, not hope."

Apparently, however, Israelis mostly don't seem that upset with Netanyahu, whether they agree with Herzog or not. However harsh Herzog's criticisms, his Labor party consistently polls lower than Netanyahu's Likud. Indeed, polls consistently show Netanyahu to be the leader that Israelis would be most likely to re-elect.

And while an Israeli Channel 10 poll from last week indicated that 45 per cent of Israelis don't want Netanyahu to serve another term, it also showed his party winning the most seats were an election to be held now.

"Most people think he has an even keel," said Jonathan Rynhold, a senior researcher specializing in U.S.-Israel relations at Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. "The Israeli public may grumble, but they think he's far and away the best option there is out there."

Dahlia Scheindlin, an independent pollster and political analyst, said that while most Israelis support a two-state solution, they don't see Netanyahu's inaction as the main obstacle to a deal.

"They see the status quo as sustainable," she said. "They support the idea of the two-state solution, but absolve Israel of any responsibility to get there because they believe the blame for not reaching that is on the Palestinian side."

The way Hebrew University political science professor Gideon Rahat sees it, Netanyahu is risk averse because he's trying to appeal to the Israeli political centre while maintaining right-wing policies.

"Netanyahu doesn't need to appeal to the right wing," he said. "He needs to worry that he's in the centre. And if he's seen as someone who's cautious and moderate, that helps him."

Even if the U.S. officials' criticisms resonate with Israelis, Rynhold said Israelis would likely not side with the Obama administration over their own prime minister.

"For Israelis, it's a shrug of the shoulders," he said. "Obama's standing is very low with the Israeli public. They don't think his policies toward the Middle East are effective or wise, so harsh criticism of Netanyahu will have no impact. Those who don't like Netanyahu will not like him anyway." ■

OPINION

The strange story of the Lancet editor and Israel

Gerald Steinberg

The *Lancet* is one of the most prestigious medical journals in Britain and the world, but has also been a major source of immoral demonization and political warfare against Israel. Under Dr. Richard Horton, editor since 1995, it has published numerous pseudo-scientific articles falsely accusing Israel of war crimes, including causing birth defects among Palestinians.

And yet, on Oct. 2, Horton suddenly arrived in Israel as a guest of Haifa's Rambam Hospital. Though he has been to Ramallah's Birzeit University numerous times, and also to Jerusalem's Augusta Victoria Hospital, which serves primarily Palestinians, he never took the short walk to Hadassah Hospital to meet Israeli doctors and patients – Jews and Arabs alike.

Horton's Israel visit was not triggered by a sudden moral awakening. Instead, he came under extreme duress, after being publicly embarrassed for having published a scurrilous letter during the Gaza war that repeated the standard anti-Israeli propaganda while erasing 4,560 Hamas rocket attacks.

More importantly, NGO Monitor's research team exposed the activities of two of the primary authors – Dr. Paola Manduca and Dr. Swee Ang Chai – in promoting hard core anti-Semitism, including a video featuring white supremacist David Duke. Only after this information was featured in Britain's *Daily Telegraph*, Elsevier, the multinational publisher-owner of the *Lancet*, responded to the pressure. The naming and shaming of Horton and the extremist circle around him compelled him to act, bringing him to Rambam's doorstep.

Long before the infamous Gaza letter, Manduca and Swee Ang were *Lancet* regulars. Horton published articles that they had co-authored, including Manduca's "birth defects" series. Funding for one of these studies came from Interpal, for which Manduca has also raised money. The United States has designated Interpal as a terrorist entity "utilized to hide the flow of money to Hamas."

At no time did Horton do the necessary due diligence required of an editor. He did not question the standard statements by the authors of the Gaza letter claiming that they had no conflicts of interest, although a number are active in anti-Israel NGOs that exploit medicine for propaganda. Manduca is with the New Weapons Committee, which has made unsubstantiated claims that Israel "experimented" with new weapons on Gazans and Lebanese. Swee Ang co-founded and remains a leader of Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), which is very active in promoting the Palestinian political cause.

Horton himself has a clear conflict, stemming from his central role in the Lancet-Palestinian Health Alliance, which meets annually at Birzeit University, largely to bash Israel. The LPHA was founded by a group of Palestinian and international researchers that includes Rita Giacaman and Abdullatif Husseini of Birzeit University as well as Horton.

During his week of meetings in Israel and a subsequent editorial in the *Lancet*, Horton refused to engage on this history and his responsibility for the immoral and hate-filled anti-Israel campaigns. He acknowledged the obvious – that the Gaza letter "does not describe the full reality," expressed regret at the "unnecessary polarization," and referred to the anti-Semitic video as "abhorrent."

Skeptics see this as a temporary effort to avoid a major investigation, while Horton's Israeli hosts hope for a genuine, if partial, atonement. Perhaps Horton's role in the unethical war against Israel does not reflect inherent anti-Semitism, but rather overriding ambition and the influence of his social and intellectual milieu.

Regardless, the pressure must continue until Horton, the *Lancet*, and Elsevier (the publisher) issue clear apologies, retract the hate-filled articles that were never worthy of publication, and create mechanisms to prevent a recurrence.

More broadly, in fighting the unethical demonization of Israel and the new anti-Semitism, this case demonstrates the importance of naming and shaming the perpetrators. By exposing the role of the *Lancet* in this unethical behaviour, we have shown that success is possible. ■

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Jerusalem: Netanyahu calls for responsibility and restraint

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for "responsibility and restraint" by lawmakers in Jerusalem and said he would not change the current arrangements on the Temple Mount.

"Let us not play into the hands of our extremist enemies. I think that what is necessary now is to show restraint and to work together to calm the situation. I ask that you join me in the effort to maintain the existing order, let nobody harm it, certainly not our right to go up to the Temple Mount, but we will not change the arrangements. I also ask that private initiatives be avoided as well as unbridled statements. At this time we must show responsibility and restraint," Netanyahu said Sunday at the beginning of the weekly cabinet meeting.

Netanyahu said the government is "committed to the status quo for Jews, Muslims and Christians" on the Temple Mount, adding that "it is easy to start a religious fire, but much more difficult to extinguish it."

He said the messages of restraint and the continuation of the status quo have been passed along to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as "to all elements in the area."

Israelis wave the Israeli flag as they participate in a prayer rally for Rabbi Yehuda Glick at Safra Square in Jerusalem on Nov. 1. YONATAN SINDEL FLASH90 PHOTO

Netanyahu made his remarks as unrest continued over the weekend at the Temple Mount and in eastern Jerusalem following the reopening of the holy site early Friday morning, after its closure in the wake of an assassination attempt Oct. 29 of a Temple Mount activist, Rabbi Yehuda Glick.

Over the weekend, Israel Police arrested 17 suspects involved in disturbances in Jerusalem, according to the police. Some 111 suspects have been arrested since a Palestinian man drove his car into a Jerusalem light rail station in northern Jerusalem 10 days ago.

Israeli lawmaker, Moshe Feiglin, visited the Temple Mount on Sunday morning, saying he was trying to "shoulder the burden carried until now by our dear friend, Rabbi Yehuda Glick.

"My visit to the Temple Mount was 'accompanied' by tens of Arabs shouting threats and curses. They feel that they have nothing to fear. Despite the attempted murder, Arabs were allowed to pray on the Temple Mount, while Jews were barred until today," Feiglin said in a Facebook post after visiting the site.

"This morning on the Mount, I was surrounded by police security, while the Arabs were free to walk about. That is just one more way to see who feels at home on the Mount and who feels like an intruder. With God's help, we will change that 'status quo,'" he wrote.

Knesset security has assigned a bodyguard to Feiglin due to death threats that he has received.

Rabbi Glick remains in serious condition and on a respirator at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. ■

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In light of the rise of 'new' anti-Semitism throughout the world, our distinguished panel will discuss challenges faced by students on campuses through both fact and the fiction of Dr. Nora Gold in her book *Fields of Exile*. What can Jewish students, instructors and others concerned with this issue do? Moderated by Rabbi Adam Cutler. No charge.
Fields of Exile
Nora Gold is author of *Fields of Exile*, the first novel about Anti-Israelism on campus.
Dr. Marty Lockshin is chair of the Department of Humanities, York University.
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New conversion bill passes cabinet vote

Pictured, from left, MKs David Rotem and Elazar Stern with Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni at a press conference announcing the Law of Conversion to Judaism. FLASH90 PHOTO

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Israel's cabinet has approved a government regulation that will reform the conversion process.

The regulation approved Nov. 2 at the regular weekly cabinet meeting will have the force of law. It can, however, be rescinded by the cabinet as well.

Only one government minister, the Jewish Home party's Uri Ariel, who serves as housing minister, voted against the regulation, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

The bill aims to break the monopoly of the chief rabbinate and allow municipal rabbis to perform conversions in Israel. It would make it easier for an estimated 400,000 Israelis, most of them from the former Soviet Union, to formally convert to Judaism if they so choose.

Conversion is the only way that most of these Israeli citizens can get married in Israel. As there is no civil marriage in the Jewish state, issues of personal status including marriage and divorce are controlled by the country's chief rabbinate, which has become more ultra-Orthodox in the past few years. According to Jewish law, Jewishness is matrilineal, and the only way to be defined as Jewish is to have a Jewish mother or a recognized Orthodox conversion.

If a couple wants to get married in Israel, the chief rabbinate requires proof of Jewishness, often a copy of the parents' Jewish marriage contract. However, under Communism, when practising religion was illegal, many Jews were unable to celebrate religious Jewish marriages and would not have the required documents.

Rabbi David Stav, the chairman of the Tzohar rabbinical organization, says there are an estimated 100,000 children under the age of 18 who are not legally Jewish. About 4,500 more are born each year.

"This is a nuclear bomb threat for the Jewish identity of the State of Israel," he told the *Media Line*. "Eventually, the Jewish identity of the state of Israel will not exist."

That leaves tens of thousands of people who can't get married in the country where they are citizens. A growing number are getting married in Cyprus or the Czech Republic, and the civil marriage there is then recognized by the State of Israel. Others are choosing not to get married at all.

Currently, only about 2,000 people are able to convert each year, half of them through a special program called Nativ, run by the Israeli army, via one of the four conversion courts in the country.

The bill, which is sponsored by member of Knesset Elazar Stern, hopes to establish up to 30 religious courts to enable tens of thousands of people to convert. He is working with Tzohar, an organization of liberal rabbis.

In the 1990s, more than one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union moved to Israel and became citizens. They came under the Law of Return, which grants Israeli citizenship and generous financial incentives to anybody with one Jewish grandparent. These immigrants quickly learned Hebrew and integrated into Israeli society. Now many of them say they want to officially convert.

"What motivates me is the connection between Judaism and democracy," MK Elazar Stern told the *Media Line*. "If our Judaism will not be connected to the current Israeli society and the Jewish people around the world, we will not survive in the Middle East."

However the chief rabbis have already said they will not recognize any conversions done in these new courts. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who originally supported the bill, has withdrawn his support, apparently under pressure from the Orthodox parties in the Israeli Knesset. ■

The Media Line
themedialine.org
With files from JTA

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

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Advisers pledge co-ordination on Iran talks

JTA
WASHINGTON

The United States and Israel will maintain "unprecedented co-ordination" as nuclear talks go forward with Iran, the White House said after a summit of the two nations' security advisers.

"On Iran, the U.S. delegation reaffirmed our commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," said the statement describing the meeting of the U.S.-Israel Consultative Group, co-chaired at the White House by Susan Rice, the U.S. national security adviser, and Yossi Cohen, her Israeli counterpart.

"The two sides discussed the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the P5+1 and [European Union] to reach a comprehensive solution that peacefully and verifiably resolves the international community's concerns with Iran's program," the statement said, using the acronym for the major powers now in nuclear talks with Iran.

"The delegations pledged to continue the unprecedented co-ordination between the United States and Israel as negotiations continue."

The statement comes after a week of tensions between Israel and the United States sparked by the publication in the *Atlantic* of an attack by an unnamed Obama administration official who, using colourful language, described Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as cowardly.

Notably, the White House statement did not mention the moribund Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Instead, it described discussion of "pressing issues, including ongoing efforts by the United States and coalition partners to degrade and ultimately destroy IS," the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. A photo distributed with the statement showed Rice and Cohen embracing. The U.S.-Israel Consultative Group meets twice a year. ■

Ruling over others against Jewish values, Rabin says

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israel cannot protect its Jewish and democratic character without peace, former president Shimon Peres said at a memorial for Yitzhak Rabin.

"Peace has become a derogatory term. There are those who say that those who believe in peace are naive, not patriots, delusional," Peres said Sunday night to thousands of people gathered in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv for the event. "But I say to all those in a clear voice, those who give up on peace are the ones who are delusional."

Rabin was assassinated 19 years ago by Yigal Amir, who remains in jail. Nov. 5 marks the anniversary on the Hebrew calendar of the assassination.

"Ruling over another people is against our values as Jews. To pursue peace is a mitzvah. It's also very practical, very Jewish," Peres said.

The Israeli Peace Initiative and Nov. 4 groups were among the organizers of the memorial, which featured a more political overtone.

A second memorial, sponsored by a coalition of groups from the left and right, including youth movements, will take place Nov. 8 in Rabin Square. President Reuven Rivlin will serve as keynote speaker at the rally, which will remember Rabin's life and legacy, the Dror Israeli Movement announced Nov. 2. ■

Thousands of Israelis gathered at the Tel Aviv square. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

The Return of the Violin
a film by Haim Hecht

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Congregation Habonim
5 Glen Park Avenue, Toronto

A story about survival, not only of people but of a remarkable violin. The 1713 Stradivarius was given to a young Polish Jewish prodigy, Bronislaw Huberman, from Częstochowa. The story of Huberman and his violin are skillfully interwoven with the story of Sigmund Rolat, a Holocaust survivor, from Częstochowa. Huberman later became the founder of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, in the process rescuing many European Jews from the Holocaust. Huberman's violin, stolen during his life time, is now owned by celebrated violinist Joshua Bell.

"Expertly directed... No movie director could make up a story like this."
–The Jewish Chronicle

This event is co-sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation and by Helen Stollar, in memory of her husband, Jack Stollar. Holocaust Education Week is coordinated by the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

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Jewish Life

Second Story celebrates its 25th year of publishing

Margie Wolfe has been publishing Holocaust books for young readers for 25 years.

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Born in Germany to Holocaust-survivor parents after World War II, Toronto publisher Margie Wolfe has for many years been engaged in the pivotal task of exporting published Holocaust books to some 50 countries around the globe, both in their original English and translated into about 40 languages.

Holocaust books for young readers are a main staple of Second Story Press, the company she co-founded with three partners 25 years ago. (Second Story held a silver anniversary bash at the downtown Cecil Street Community Centre on Nov. 5.)

Wolfe, who arrived with her parents in Canada in 1951, says the company has published about 20 titles to date in its Holocaust for Young Readers series, which – phenomenally – has achieved worldwide sales of more than two million copies.

Top-selling books have included such prize-winners as *Hannah's Suitcase* (2002) by Karen Levine, and the two titles by Kathy Kacer – *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser* (1998) and *Clara's War* (2000) – that first demonstrated to Wolfe that stories on the dark subject of the Holocaust, if told with care and sensitivity, could be appropriate for young readers. The series's success has unquestionably broadened Holocaust lit's horizons as a genre, she asserts. (The company now also distributes many titles in the Azrieli Foundation series of Holocaust memoirs.)

"I love it, love it, love it, every time one of our books is translated into German or goes into eastern Europe or to places where they've never heard of the Holocaust, like Indonesia, Korea, Iceland and Malaysia," she says, adding that 95 per cent of the books' readers are not Jewish.

"Last year at the Frankfurt Book Fair, one Brazilian publisher told a Canadian government official that Second Story books had transformed what kids were being taught in Brazilian schools. The magic of these books is that they are now all over the world."

A 37-year veteran of the publishing trade and a former co-publisher at Women's Press, Wolfe (who is president and publisher of Second Story) and her partners founded the publishing house on "a vision of doing women-focused human rights, social-justice books, primarily for adults but also for children." That is still the company's vision today. "We don't do bunny-rabbit books," she remarks.

Second Story has ventured into many subject areas and series, including mysteries, Gutsy Girl books and the I'm A Great Little Kid Series. It recently published its first adult novel, *The First Principles of Dreaming* by Beth Goobie, which shines a light on child abuse. Its First Nations books include *Shannen and the Dream for a School*, about events in Attawapiskat, the northern Cree community; the story is now being turned into a movie.

Second Story has also turned out several titles by local children's author Anne Dublin, including profiles of journalist-activist June Callwood and athlete Bobbie Rosenfeld. Books on feminist history include the anthology *Writing the Revolution* by Michelle Landsberg, while LGBT-themed books include *Branded by the Pink Triangle* by Ken Setterington, which won the 2014 Canadian Jewish Book Award for Holocaust Literature. The press and its offspring have garnered a prolific number of literary prizes over the years.

Wolfe speaks proudly of innumerable new titles hot off the press, including Kathy Kacer's latest, *The Magician of Auschwitz*.

"It's an extraordinary true story. I just came back from Frankfurt, and there was all kinds of interest expressed in it from six or seven publishers from all over the world."

Then there is *Every Day Is Malala Day*, Rosemary McCarney's tribute to girls' education activist Malala Yousafzai, the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Wolfe was supposed to join Malala, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and 400 school girls at a Toronto-area school on Oct. 22, but Harper and Malala withdrew at the last moment because of the Ottawa shooting.

Twenty-five years into its mission, Second Story's list of hundreds of published titles seems no less robust than its ambitious plans to publish many, many more from its headquarters in a renovated garment-district warehouse on Maud Street, in the Richmond-Bathurst neighbourhood. The company has a staff of seven and employs many freelancers and commissioned sales people as well. While the company has branched into digital books, sales of its traditional books remain strong.

"Nobody is saying any more, the way they said 10 years ago, that print is dead," Wolfe declares. "Ten years ago they said that by this time, we would not be reading print. But that's simply not true – and it's certainly not true for children's books." ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

HOLOCAUST-THEMED MUSICAL WORKS PART OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK

Two musical works by renowned Canadian composer **Sid Robinovitch** are being performed in *Out of Darkness, Holocaust Remembrance from Two Jewish Worlds*. One piece focuses on the story of Toronto Holocaust survivor **Eddy Sterk,** the other on the destruction of the Jewish community of Rhodes. Free admission, everyone welcome. Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave. Nov. 7, 9 p.m.

In another musical event at another venue, pianist **Constanze Beckman** and violinist **Atis Bankas** perform *Music From Kaunas Ghetto*, a concert of original ghetto programs and a new composition, along with interactive story telling. The acclaimed musicians perform in commemoration of Holocaust Education Week. Beth Torah Congregation, 47 Glenbrook Ave. Wednesday Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. www.bethtorah.ca

• • •

Film Events

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *As Seen Through These Eyes*, a documentary narrated by **Maya Angelou** about a group of extraordinary people who fought the Nazis with the only weapons they had: charcoal, pencil stubs, sheds of paper and memories etched in their minds. Guest speaker, filmmaker **Hilary Helstein**. $15, $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Nov. 9, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents two screenings of *24 Days*, French director **Alexandre Arcady's** prize-winning thriller based on the **Ilan Halimi** kidnapping in Paris, 2006. $15. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Nov. 16, 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. www.tjff.com, 416-324-9121.

•TJFF presents a screening of *The Last Sentence*, a subtitled Swedish film based on the life of crusading journalist **Torgny Segerstedt**, who battled against Nazism and his country's policy of appeasement to Hitler. Royal Cinema, 608 College St. Nov. 19, 8:30 p.m.

• *Reunions* is a short film about **Sydney Zoltak's** return to Poland with the March of the Living and his emotional reunion with his Polish rescuer. It is being screened Nov. 4 at the Hamilton Film Festival, Nov. 11 at the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival.

• • •

Arts in Brief

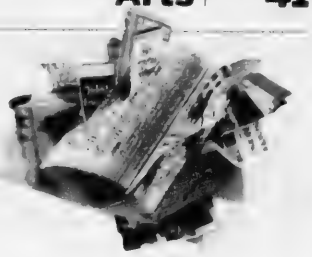
• *I Don't Want You Dead*, a short play written and directed by **Neil Naft** (coarse language, sexual content) is in performance at the Palmerston Library Theatre, 560 Palmerston Ave. Nov. 6 to 8. $14, $12. www.act2studio.ca

• **Richard Rosenbaum** launches his new book, *Revenge of the Grand Narrative*, as part of the Quattro Books Fall Launch. Other titles being launched: *The Girl Before, the Girl After* by Louis-Philippe Hebert (translated by Jonathan Kaplansky), *Down the Street* by Cassandra Cronenberg, *The Hundred Lives* by Russell Thornton, *Costume and Bone* by Lucinda Johnston, *The Green Hotel* by Jesse Gilmour, and *Jazz* by Elizabeth Copeland. Supermarket, 268 Augusta Ave. Wednesday Nov. 5, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

• **Kevin Courrier** continues his series on the **Beatles** with a lecture (with film clips) titled *I Want to Hold Your Hand: Beatlemania in America*. $12 drop-in, students $6. Monday Nov. 10, 7 to 9 p.m.

• **Kitty Wintrob** discusses her childhood experience of being evacuated from her home in London's East End to the British countryside at the start of World War II. The launch of the second edition of her memoir, *I'm Not Going Back* (with a new epilogue) takes place Nov. 11, 7 p.m., at the Barbara Frum Library, 20 Covington Rd. Free admission, everyone welcome.

•Musicians **Micah Barnes, Billy Newton-Davis, Tyrone Gabriel** and **Gavin Hope** perform *Stand By Me, The Music of the Brill Building*, a concert to benefit the Miles Nadal JCC music scholarship fund. Tickets $50. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Nov. 13, 8 p.m. www.uofttix.ca, 416-978-8849.

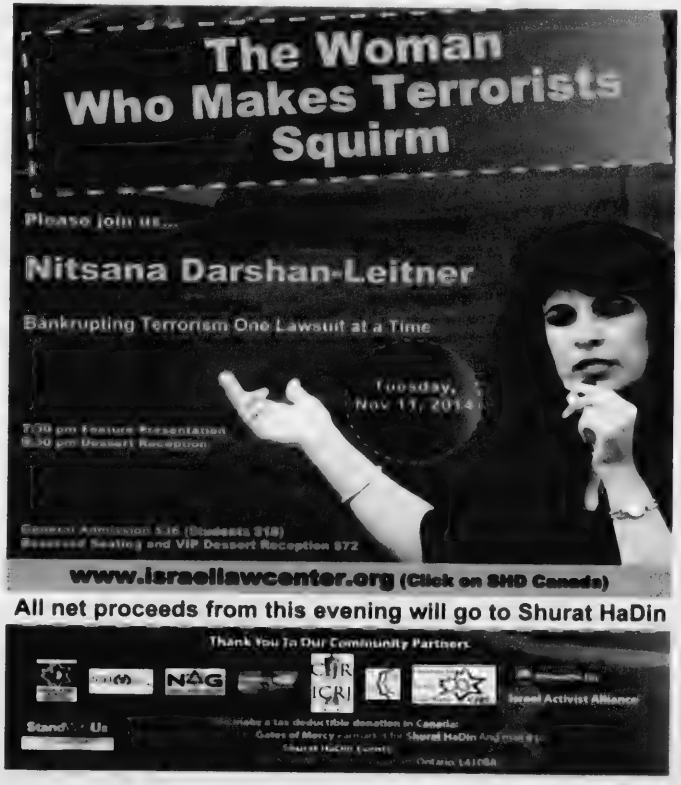


Bernice Eisenstein's Genizot runs at ROM until Feb. 8, 2015

• • •

At the Galleries: The Toronto Watercolour Society's *Aquavision*, an exhibition of more than 100 paintings, marks the Society's 30th anniversary. Papermill Gallery, Todmorden Mills, 67 Pottery Rd. Nov. 5 thru Nov. 16. Meet the artists reception, Sunday Nov. 9, 1 to 4 p.m. www.torontowatercoloursociety.com.

• *Genizot*, **Bernice Eisenstein's** site-specific installation at the Royal Ontario Museum, features 10 paintings as well as a collection of found and created objects in a cabinet; the whole relates to the theme of memory and plays with the idea of things that are hidden and found, kept and stored. Genizot is being presented as part of Holocaust Education Week but remains on view in the ROM's Samuel European Galleries to Feb. 8, 2015. ■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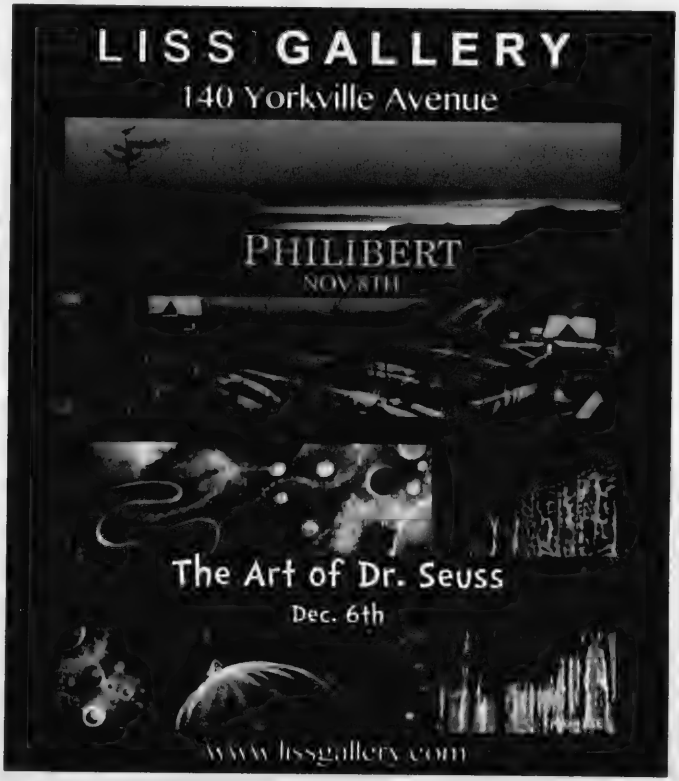

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Mideast views on campus set tone for play's conflict

Jerome Bourgault

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Actor Jerome Bourgault, 52, takes on the role of GW in Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre's production of Doron Ben Atar's *Peace Warriors*, a play set against the backdrop of Israeli-Palestinian politics on university campuses.

GW, which stands for Geoffrey Warshawksi, is the son of Holocaust survivors who settled in London. He has become a world renowned academic.

"The play centres around the lives of Ivy League academics – they're very much the intellectual liberal elite," explains Bourgault, an Ottawa native, who has resided in Toronto for the last two years. "It takes place over a weekend at the home of Darryl and Scooter Lewis, who are both academics and have a daughter named Gwen. They live in New Haven because the mom, Darryl, is a professor of gender studies at Yale University."

GW is an overnight houseguest at the Lewis home. They helped him get his tenured position at Columbia University. He and Darryl are idealists who are very vocal and active in liberal academia, especially in their views on Israel. The fact that they are both Jewish gives a distinct flavour to the play.

"The politics is going to be right in the audiences' faces," Bourgault says. "It's going to mark them if they like it or not. We in the cast are working on it as a very complex relationship play that has reached a tipping point, and that's what the audience is walking in on. Things are poised to ignite in some fashion."

Bourgault says it's a play that will challenge viewers.

"Audience members will be touched by this emotionally, and will want to react, and obviously, this play was written to touch a nerve. I'm hoping that it succeeds in that way. It is a very multi-layered story – there is a lot going on in addition to the politics. The politics is very obvious but it does take a backseat to much more personal dramas between these people when the characters go off in different directions over the years."

Bourgault was raised in a French-Canadian household, and English was his second language.

"This type of politics is not something I'm too familiar with. I consider myself politically liberal, although there are certain elements of their politics that I won't necessarily agree with," he says.

Bourgault recommends that audiences remember they are watching a play. It isn't reality. "You are watching characters that are drawn as caricatures. Certainly, some of it does sound a little bit familiar, I have family who live in the States, who could maybe be their neighbours. It has shone a light on that kind of dynamic for me. I have never done anything quite like this play before."

Bourgault, a former graphic designer and copywriter stumbled into acting at the age of 38, when he answered an audition call in community theatre in North Bay, where he was living at the time. *Peace Warriors* is his first play in Toronto. He has appeared on television in *Nikita*, *Lost Girl* and *Reign*.

The father of two daughters, Rose, 13, and Zoe, 17, Bourgault is also a fiction writer, illustrator, designer, visual artist and sculptor.

The cast also includes Dawn Sadler as Darryl, Becky Grimman, Sam Rosenthal and Nicole Marie Mccafferty. ■

Peace Warriors runs at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre from Nov. 5 to 16. For tickets, call Ticketmaster at 1-855-985-2787 or online at www.teatrontheatre.com or at the Toronto Centre for the Arts box office.

Halifax launches Jewish film festival

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Jewish film festivals have hit Atlantic Canada.

The Saint John Jewish Film Festival ran for five days last month featuring films with a broad appeal, drawing on the Jewish experience. Films were from Israel, France and Germany.

Between Nov. 13 and 16, the Atlantic Jewish Film Festival in Halifax, supported by the Atlantic Jewish Council, will bring viewers seven movies from France, Israel, the U.S., Britain, and Belgium.

Lloyd Goldsmith, chairperson of the Saint John committee, recognized the opportunity when he saw a similar festival in south Florida last winter.

"I felt this could work for us, spoke with people from the Palm Beach Jewish Film Festival and then with others from various festivals in the U.S. and Canada. I brought it to our Jewish Historical Museum as a fundraising event and was told to go for it. We had six months to put it together and anticipate a great success."

In Halifax, Edna LeVine, the AJC's director of community engagement, organized a volunteer committee 18 months ago.

"We researched other festivals across the continent and in Europe and Israel and decided to proceed. We're starting small, with a low budget and venues of smaller seating, but we hope to grow it into an annual event that will appeal to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities."

The Saint John committee generated sponsorship for the event to be held at the Saint John Museum (opening night) and the Jewish Historical Museum (the remaining showings). Advance tickets, said Goldsmith, have sold evenly but he expects a lot of walk-up sales.

"We had limited time to select films and had to make quick decisions but we think the variety (comedy, tragedy, music, documentary, biography and historical) have a good selection with wide interest," Goldsmith continued.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Jewish Cardinal opens fest

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"They are prize winning films that have been featured in prestigious film festivals around the world."

Coincidentally each festival chose *The Jewish Cardinal* as its opening film. It's the true story of a Polish Jew who maintained his cultural identity even after converting to Catholicism and becoming Archbishop of Paris.

"The film is one with which most people are unfamiliar," said LeVine. "It will be interesting for them to see it."

The Atlantic Jewish Council-sponsored festival in Halifax received a grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, plus generated sponsorship in the broader community.

"We hope it will break even," said LeVine of the event to open and close at Halifax's Cineplex Park Lane with other showings at the Museum of Natural History. She leaned heavily on the Atlantic Film Festival and Toronto Jewish Film Festival for organizational advice. ■

The Outrageous Sophie Tucker closes the festival.

Gripping stories of survival from Dutch Jews now in Canada

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

This Remembrance Day, 70 years after Canadian soldiers moved into the Netherlands to start their final offensive against German forces, their harrowing yet hopeful stories of heroism will be broadcast on History Canada.

On Nov. 11, the network will air *Liberation*, an hour-long finale to the four-night documentary series *War Story*. The episode blends powerful testimony and archive footage of the courageous Canadian infantrymen. *Liberation* also features gripping stories of survival from Dutch Jews who survived the war and later immigrated to Canada.

One figure interviewed for the film was Joe Knypstra. A Dutch Jew who survived a concentration camp in Ommen, Knypstra recounts how he and his father, who lived as butchers in the town of Zevenaar, stole meat every week and supplied meat to the Jews in town. A farmer who realized one of his cows was missing betrayed Knypstra and his father to the authorities.

The Dutch guards in the camp, Knypstra says in the episode, were notorious. They would sometimes call him and other men out of their rooms in the middle of the night and whip them. Some would die outside, naked, while those who made it through the whippings would crawl back to the barracks.

Liberation also focuses on Betty Laron, who was a grade-schooler when the Germans invaded her hometown of Zevenaar. She says her family knew of the horrors that awaited them at a concentration camp.

"The Jews were the chosen people," Laron says in the episode. "I wish that God had chosen another people."

Laron, who now lives in Burlington, Ont., was the same age as Anne Frank in 1944. Like Frank, her family hid with a family of Dutch gentiles. The Heister family hid Betty and her parents in their home – one that was right beside a Dutch soldier's house and kept Laron on high alert.

Liberation, as if the title did not give it away, also deals with the mixed reaction to the end of the war. Some of the soldiers were deeply relieved and enjoyed the attention and comfort from the Dutch women. Others, like Lt. Walter Keith, felt "dead" when the fighting was over.

"All you could think of were the guys that had gone," Keith says in the episode. "There was no feeling, there was a numbness."

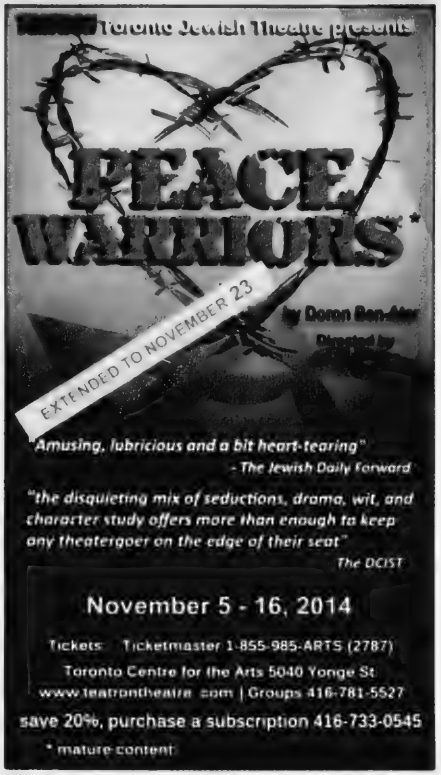
Also interviewed for the film was Canadian gunner Val Rimer, who was also Jewish. Upon encountering German soldiers marching to an Allied POW camp, he told them that, "There is a Jewish person here that helped to end this war."

Rimer died in Calgary in January 2014, shortly after recording his story for this documentary special. The series was produced with the assistance of Historica Canada, whose Memory Project has recorded the testimony of thousands of Canadian veterans.

The beginning of *Liberation* is slightly uneven if you have not seen the prior nights of the four-part *War Story* special, as the soldiers refer to historical events and people featured in earlier episodes. Regardless, the testimony is moving and emotionally powerful. Some of the men who comment about their time on the front lines are visibly shaken as they talk about the close calls and their fallen comrades.

The footage is also striking, especially when one realizes the camera was rolling right next to rat-a-tat rifle gunfire and as medics picked up corpses. Some of the hazy photography, always presented in black and white, shows the literal fog of war as soldiers ran into smoke, unable to see what waited on the other side.

War Story begins its four-night program on Saturday, Nov. 8. *Liberation*, the two-part finale, airs on History channel on Nov. 11, at 8 p.m. ■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Toronto actress is NSFW

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

NSFW, an acronym for *Not Safe for Work* is a play that questions the way girls and women are represented in the media, especially in magazine journalism, says Toronto actress Jessica Greenberg.

It examines "issues of privacy and consent and how those things are impacted by digital technology in the time of Photoshop and social media," says Greenberg who plays Charlotte in Studio 180 Theatre's North American premiere of *NSFW*, written by British playwright Lucy Kirkwood, running until Nov. 30 at The Theatre Centre.

"The play juxtaposes two fictionalized magazine cultures. One is a magazine called *Doghouse*, which is a men's magazine. It is mainstream, kind of like a version of *Maxim*, and because it is set in the United Kingdom where censorship and standards are different, I would think there is more actual nudity than you would see in a comparable North American magazine."

According to Greenberg, the other magazine, *Electra*, is an upmarket woman's magazine catering to a well-educated, middle-class, empowered clientele, which focuses on fashion, beauty, and some politics. She says it is similar to Canada's *Chatelaine* magazine.

"The structure of the play is pretty interesting," explains the actress. "We start out in *Doghouse* and then we move to *Electra*. What it uncovers is that [the *Electra*] culture isn't necessarily any better for women than *Doghouse*. Even the images we consume in mainstream media that, as female consumers, we want, we have to think more critically about what those images are doing to us, how damaging they are and how they play on all of our fears of inadequacy."

Charlotte is an intelligent, hardworking, Oxford educated 25-year-old aspiring journalist who works at *Doghouse*. Although she is conflicted, she takes the job because she knows how hard it is to find work even after spending three years paying her dues as an unpaid intern.

"Questions of consent are really important in this play and I think there is an opportunity to provoke much more critical and nuanced conversation about consent than we have been traditionally having in our culture," says Greenberg.

"I would love audiences to think more critically about the media we consume, and what we are saying about our values and our priorities when we are complicit in a culture that perpetuates unattainable, false and damaging images of women.

"None of this probably comes as any surprise, it is nothing new that images are doctored…and yet we still participate. I don't know what it is going to take for our culture to move ahead. I hope that this play can be part of that conversation though."

Greenberg says the most important pieces of her Jewish identity come from the responsibility she feels to work toward a more socially just society. "I believe in healing the world and that's where I connect most to the religion. Not that those are exclusively Jewish values, but they are a big part of Judaism and that for me is what resonates the most and that's the work that inspires [Charlotte] the most."

Greenberg is a core artistic team member and artist educator for Studio 180 Theatre and heads the company's education and outreach initiatives.

Jessica Greenberg

She has co-ordinated a lobby art exhibit during the run of *NSFW* called *Reposing Beauty* curated by Feminist Art Conference, and an after-show panel discussion with female journalists on Nov. 18 about maintaining your integrity in the media co-presented by Toronto magazine, *Shameless*.

First produced at the Royal Court Theatre in England in 2012, this production runs from Nov. 7 to 30 at The Theatre Centre.

The ensemble cast includes Ian D. Clark, Susan Coyne, Patrick Galligan, James Graham and Aaron Stern. The play is directed by Joel Greenberg. ■

Tickets to see NSFW are available by calling 416-907-0468 or online at www.studio180theatre.com.

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Self-published collection garners awards for poet

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Self-published poet Topaz Ruby has beaten the odds with her first book, *Reaching Beyond Ourselves: Leading a Spiritual, Peaceful and Diverse World*, a meditation on peace and a love letter to Judaism, Israel and the world.

Self-published books are rarely nominated for awards, but Ruby's collection of verse won a 2014 Beverly Hills Book Award in the poetry category. And one of the poems, *The Dancing Phoenix*, received a poetry award in *ArtAscent* magazine's 2013 international competition.

Ruby, 31, was born in Ukraine, lived in Israel for some 20 years and moved to Canada about five years ago. Included in *Reaching Beyond Ourselves*, a wide-ranging 145-page volume, are poems about Ruby's Ukrainian legacy, in which she raises the topics of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Some of the poems describe her life in Israel and explore Judaism, while others are about her dreams of and hopes for peace ("Maybe only after a good dream/ We may wake up to a new reality").

"I wanted to celebrate human differences and, by doing so, promote diversity," she said, from Halifax, adding that she hopes the book will build bridges between communities.

Ruby, who remembers windows shattering in her home in Petah Tikvah when Iraq fired Scud missiles at Israel during the 1991 Gulf War, said that even as a nine-year-old living in Israel, she "wanted to write about peace in a way that would unite all people, regardless of political belief, race and religion."

Although many of the poems in *Reaching Beyond Ourselves* are autobiographical, Ruby acknowledged that she did some "creative editing." To keep the tone of the book somewhat upbeat despite the seriousness of the subjects she tackled, she avoided using material she thought would be too disturbing. For example, in the poem *My Polish Friend*, she recalls the anti-Semitism she encountered at a daycare centre in Ukraine ("'Are you Ukrainian or Jewish,' they inquire,/ You better not be Jewish, consequences dire!")

"I didn't include the actual dialogue, the curse words," she said.

Ruby's family immigrated to Israel in 1990, and she quickly learned Hebrew. In the poem *The Power of Language*, she describes her first "writing," translating

Topaz Ruby

Russian into Hebrew for neighbours ("The day I helped an old lady purchase glasses,/ I had to miss some school classes,/ I applied to a Holocaust survivors' fund/ She was so happy, I was stunned!").

Ruby became a lawyer when, in 2009, she decided to move to Halifax to join her family, who had immigrated earlier. She took up photography in Halifax, and at an exhibit of her work, people asked her questions about her background and Israel, she said, which got her thinking about writing a book.

At that time, she wrote some stories about herself as a gift for a nephew's bar mitzvah and a niece's bat mitzvah, which became the basis for her *Reaching Beyond Ourselves*.

The book is beautifully illustrated with Ruby's photographs and paintings as well as the works of four other artists.

Ruby's pen name is a tribute to her grandfather, Tuvia, and her grandmother, Pessia, both of whom were Holocaust survivors. "I just combined the names 'Tuvia' and 'Pessia,' and the sound sounded like 'Topaz,'" she said. "Ruby" is derived from "Rubinstein," her grandmother's maiden name. "I use [Topaz Ruby] because I dedicate my writing to them." She said she's experienced some emotional moments while reading parts of her book to Holocaust survivors. "I felt I was fulfilling my duty as a second-generation Holocaust survivor." ■

Visit www.topazruby.ca

Ramat Givat Zeev—Most Sought After Neighborhood Among Olim To Hold Sales Event in Canada

The event will take place following the organization of a group of buyers from Toronto who are seeking to purchase dozens of units

Nofei Israel will be holding its first real estate sales event in Canada, at which its flagship Ramat Givat Zev project will be exhibited. The event is coming to Canada following heightened interest from Canadian communities for the most talked about project for olim in Israel. It will take place on November 9, 2014.

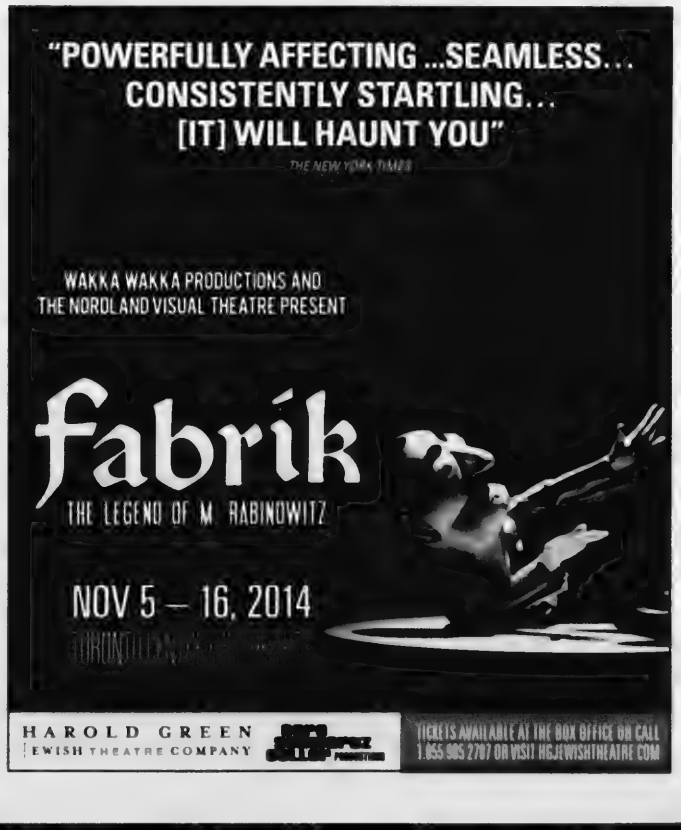
In recent months, a large group of buyers from Toronto has gotten together to execute an organized purchase of dozens of housing units in Ramat Givat Zeev. As a result, the developers have decided to send the marketing team to Canada in order to make it easier for the buyers and for many others who have expressed interest. The Canadian communities join many families from American communities who have already decided to make the neighborhood their new home.

At the event, potential buyers will be able to meet professional marketing personnel and to hear details about the neighborhoods many advantages. Ramat Givat Zeev has become the hottest name as a potential new home for those seeking to make aliyah.

Nofei Israel is the largest real estate marketing company in the Orthodox community. It has constructed thousands of housing units, and is considered a leading builder of large neighborhoods for specific populations. This important record has helped the developers establish this neighborhood while making sure to meet all the needs of the buyers—to the finest detail.

Ramat Givat Zeev has become known as a unique neighborhood being built for olim. The developers have gone to great lengths to provide exclusive advantages for optimal acclimation to the new homes, with an emphasis on building a warm, homogenous community that includes a plethora of excellent educational institutions that suit the mentality of the residents.

Ramat Givat Zeev offers a luxury residential setting that includes rich technical specifications, verdant parks and shopping centers. Likewise, it is located just north of Jerusalem and combines a tranquil suburban setting with breathtaking views of the Jerusalem Hills, while benefiting from the short distance to all the central parts of the capital city.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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 6, 2014

Book examines marriage and divorce law in Israel

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One the most painful issues in modern Jewish life is the plight of the agunah (the "chained woman"). According to Halachah, no tribunal – religious or secular – can terminate a Jewish marriage by declaration, as is done in Western legal systems. A divorce occurs only when a husband, of his own free will, gives a *get*, a religious Jewish divorce, to his wife at a rabbinic court (beit din). If the former husband refuses to do this, his wife is "chained"; she remains married from the halachic perspective until one of them dies. Theoretically, women, too, could trap their husbands in a marriage by refusing to accept a *get*, but in practice this is rare.

For the last two millennia, rabbis occasionally coerced husbands to give a *get*. They argued that deep down inside every Jew wants to do the right thing, so such a coerced *get* was still given "freely" and was thus valid. Even now, when the rabbis determine that the "right thing" is to give a *get*, they try to "help" the husband reach that decision.

This system does not always work. Husbands withhold a *get* as a way to extort money, custody, or other concessions from their wives. In North America, sometimes rabbis point out that the modern secular state has stripped Jewish courts of their coercive powers. In Canada, a beit din has no simple way to coerce a recalcitrant husband to give a *get*. The rabbis claim that if only they had the coercive powers of old, they could solve the agunah problem.

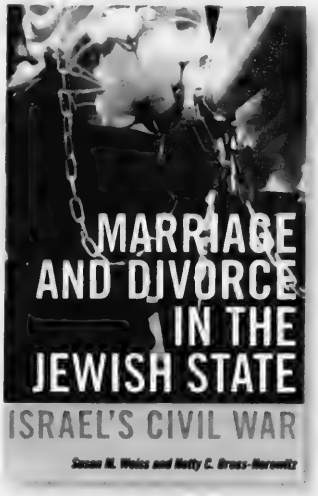
Marriage and Divorce in the Jewish State, by Susan M. Weiss and Netty C. Gross-Horowitz dispels this argument once and for all. The authors paint a shocking picture of the predicament of women denied a divorce in the modern State of Israel where rabbis do have coercive powers.

Marriage and divorce in Israel are not governed by the Israeli secular courts, but by state-employed Orthodox rabbinic courts. The only way two Jews can marry is in an Orthodox Jewish ceremony. The only way they can divorce is at a beit din of Orthodox rabbinic judges. Since they are employed by the state, these judges have the right to impose sanctions on a *get* withholder, including the right to imprison him. They exercise such powers from time to time.

Then why does the system not work? Because for political reasons, almost all rabbinic judges in Israel are haredi men with no secular education and little sympathy for the positive changes in the status of women in the West in the last half century. Moreover, as the authors write: "Israeli law requires rabbinic judges to pledge their loyalty only to 'the State of Israel.' All other judges pledge their loyalty both to 'the State of Israel' and to 'its laws.' The distinction is not meaningless. Rabbinic judges do not and will not pay even lip service to laws enacted by the Knesset."

These judges allow husbands to use the *get* as a cudgel to gain an advantage. They do not recognize marital breakdown as sufficient grounds to order a husband to give a *get*. Amazingly, some rabbinic courts in Israel consider it permissible for a man to bind a woman to him even when they are convinced that no possibility of reconciliation exists.

As Weiss and Gross-Horowitz show in their gripping book, rabbinic courts in Israel often fail to protect women whose marriages have broken down. They cannot remarry legally in Israel without a *get*. If they simply choose to ignore the court and move in with a new male partner without a *get*, they are in danger of having their subsequent children declared *mamzerim* (illegitimate products of an "adulterous" relationship). Those children's names would be placed on a registry of people barred from marriage in Israel



Marriage and Divorce in the Jewish State: Israel's Civil War
Susan M. Weiss and Netty C. Gross-Horowitz
Brandeis University Press

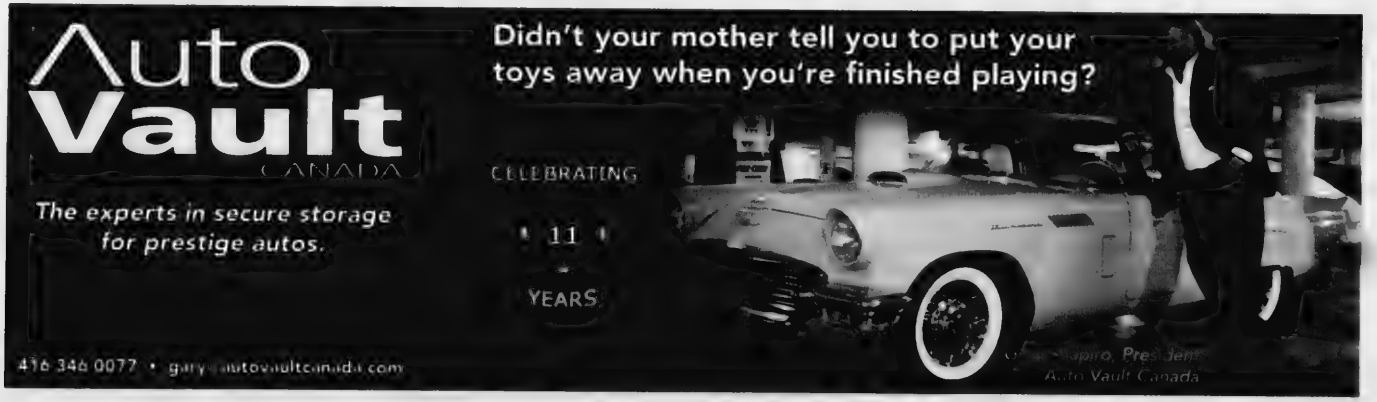
> *Almost all rabbinic judges in Israel are haredi men with no secular education.*

In the first chapter, Weiss and Gross-Horowitz summarize the traditional Jewish laws of divorce. The skilled writing of Gross-Horowitz, a veteran journalist at the *Jerusalem Report* makes even the technical legal discussions of the book understandable. (Still, the book would have benefited from better copy-editing and fact checking.)

The next six chapters are the anguishing stories of six women who received no relief from the rabbinic court systems for many years. One of the six never received her *get*. Others were "chained" for all the years when they could have moved on and restarted a family. Many of them "paid" for the get with unreasonable monetary concessions.

One of the authors, Weiss, a lawyer, has created a bold initiative to help agunot. Her advocacy group has helped some women sue *get*-withholding husbands for hundreds of thousands of shekels in Israel's secular courts. The rabbinical courts are fiercely fighting this initiative. They correctly understand it as an attempt to challenge their control over all aspects of Jewish divorce in Israel.

The conclusion of the authors– that Israel must initiate a system of civil marriage and divorce for all citizens – is compelling. Just like Canadian Jews, Israeli Jews could still use rabbis to solemnize or help them terminate their halachic marriages, if they wish. It is time for Israel to remove exclusive control of Jewish marriage and divorce from the hands of those who do not respect the values of most Israelis. And it is time for Orthodox rabbis on both sides of the ocean to develop creative ways to solve this problem within the halachic system. Divorce causes enough suffering without adding an extra injustice for women who are committed to Orthodoxy. ■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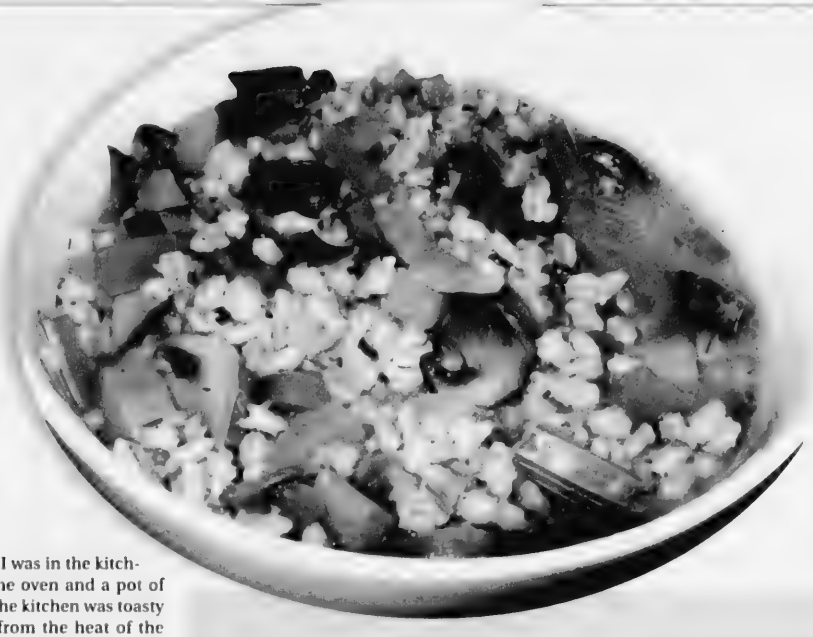


SUE EPSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One day last winter, the wind was howling and an icy rain was blowing sideways on my hilltop in the Judean Hills – the first portent of the worst winter storm to hit Israel in over 50 years.

Having nothing scheduled for the day and my home quiet, my first thought was to curl up on my living room sofa with a good book. But I decided this was a good day to be in the kitchen, my retreat, where it was warm and inviting. For many of us who enjoy cooking, the kitchen is a comfort zone – particularly that time of year.

I could make some cakes to have on hand for when friends drop by. It was also a good day to put up a pot of soup. Making soup can be as much of a pleasure as eating it – stirring it, tending to it and, best of all, tasting it. It was also a good opportunity to try some new recipes that I've had on my to-do list.

By mid-afternoon I was in the kitchen with a cake in the oven and a pot of soup on the stove. The kitchen was toasty warm and steamy from the heat of the oven and the simmering soup. For all I cared, it could be snowing and sleeting outside – the aromas wafting around were nothing short of Gan Eden.

Amazin Raisin Cake

This apple cake is so easy, and so good! Everyone who tasted it wanted the recipe.

- ❑ 3 cups flour
- ❑ 2 cups sugar
- ❑ 1 cup mayonnaise
- ❑ 1/3 cup orange juice or water
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 2 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1-1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
- ❑ 3 cups chopped, peeled apples
- ❑ 1 cup raisins
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350. Spray a 9 x 13-in. baking pan with non-stick spray or line with baking paper.

With mixer at low speed, beat first 10 ingredients for 2 minutes, scraping bowl frequently. Stir in apples, raisins and nuts by hand. Batter will be very thick.

Spread in baking pan and bake for 45-50 minutes or until tester comes out clean. Sprinkle with confectionery sugar.

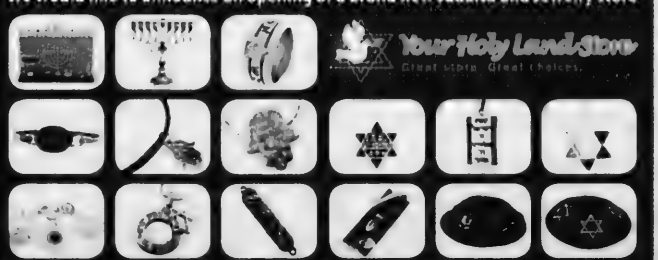
Barley Soup

I've had this recipe for many years, always meaning to try it. I'm so glad I did. It's one of those soups in which you can add or subtract ingredients and seasonings to suit your taste. This soup, along with good fresh bread, is a great dinner.

- ❑ 2 onions, whole
- ❑ 3-4 lb. chuck or other roast or 4-5 turkey necks
- ❑ marrow soup bones, optional
- ❑ 3-4 carrots, cut into chunks
- ❑ 3-4 stalks celery, cut into chunks
- ❑ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ❑ 5-6 sprigs parsley
- ❑ 2 tomatoes, quartered or 2 tbsp. tomato puree
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups barley
- ❑ salt to taste

Place meat, bones and onions in a big soup pot and fill almost to the top with water. Simmer about 1 hour. Skim top with slotted spoon. Lower heat and add carrots, celery, garlic, parsley and tomatoes. Cover with lid partially and cook slowly, about 2 hours, or until the carrots are very tender. Remove all vegetables except carrots. Add barley and salt to taste and cook until barley gets soft and tender, about another 1 to 1-1/2 hours. If it gets too thick, add water. Makes 8-10 servings. ■

We would like to announce an opening of a brand new Judaica and Jewelry store



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What's New

NOV. 6 - NOV. 13

by Lila Sarick

Thursday 6	Friday 7	Saturday 8	Sunday 9	Monday 10	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12
Last day to see exhibit on Jan Karski at Miles Nadal JCC		Learn about the magical Ziz with author Jacqueline Jules				Anti-Semitism on campus discussed tonight

Thursday, Nov. 6

YIDDISH VINKL
Bernice Eisenstein discusses her book *I was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St., noon. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
- The film *Hitler's Children* will be shown at the Barbara Frum Library, 2 p.m.
- **Waitman Wade Beorn** discusses "Ruthlessly and Mercilessly: The German Army and the Holocaust," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Friday, Nov. 7

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Musical works by composer **Sid Robinovitch** tell the story of survivor **Eddy Sterk** and the destruction of the Jewish community of Rhodes, Temple Sinai, 9 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 8

TORAH CLASS
Bracha Feder discusses the parshah, Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Temple Har Zion shows the film *Miss Judy*, the story of **Judy Feld Carr** who secretly rescued over 3,000 Syrian Jews, 8 p.m.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS
Beth Tikvah Synagogue invites all Jewish war veterans to be honoured at services, 9 a.m. Kiddush lunch follows.

THE ZIZ & THE HANUKKAH MIRACLE
Jacqueline Jules reads from her children's books about the Ziz, today 6:45 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. www.pjuptown.eventbrite.ca and Nov. 9, Bloor-Gladstone Public Library, 1101 Bloor St. W., 3 p.m.

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 20 is Nov. 10. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

LAUREN SIGEL PHOTO

Simchat Torah joy

In celebration of Simchat Torah, students at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus unrolled an entire Torah scroll. In an assembly led by Rabbi Noam Katz, dean of Jewish living, students sang joyfully and learned how the words themselves can create images and patterns that represent stories at particular spots on the scroll.

www.pjdowntown.eventbrite.ca $5.

FROM WEST SIDE TO WEST BANK
Rabbi Shlomo Riskin discusses his journey "From the West Side to the West Bank," 7:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim. info@torahinmotion.org.

Sunday, Nov. 9

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Temple Sinai shows the film *Through the Eye of the Needle*, about the tapestries of **Esther Nisenthal Krinitz,** 10 a.m.

RELATIONAL JUDAISM
Ron Wolfson discusses "Relational Judaism: The Conservative Synagogue in the 21st Century," Beth Sholom Synagogue, 8 p.m. $18. 416-635-5340, ext. 304.

LEARNING FOR WOMEN
Sara Munk discusses "Yitzchak and Rivkah:Love at first sight," and **Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig** discusses "The ice bucket challenge: Modern tzedakah?" 10 a.m., Forest Hill Jewish Centre, 466 Spadina Rd.

Monday, Nov. 10

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Violinist **Moshe Hammer** performs pre-war European music at a benefit for Chabad of Maple, 7:30 p.m., Jessgo Fine Art Gallery, 945 Wilson Ave. For tickets, call 905-303-5309 or www.stringsoftriumph.ca $90.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Philippa Sheppard discusses "The Battle of the sexes rages on the stage," Temple Emanu-El, 2 p.m. $12. 416-449-3880.

Tuesday, Nov. 11

LUNCH AND LEARN
Martin Goldfarb discusses "To be or not be: Mayor," 12:15 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Kitty Wintrob launches the updated edition of her memoir *I'm not going back: wartime memoir of a child evacuee,"* Barbara Frum Library, 7 p.m.

BANKRUPTING TERRORISM
Nitsana Darshan-Leitner discusses "Bankrupting terrorism, one lawsuit at a time," Beth Tzedec Congregation. Presentation at 7:30 p.m., dessert reception, 9:30 p.m. For tickets, email: shurathadin.eventbrite.com or 1-888-254-8708.

CAROLINE GLICK
Caroline Glick, author of *The Israeli Solution: A One-State Plan for Peace in the Middle East* speaks at Beth Sholom Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. RSVP at www.beth-sholom.net.

WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE
Amal Elsana-Alhjooj, founder of the Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation, discusses "Women as agents of change: Maintaining tradition, realizing potential," with **Naomi Shachter**, associate director of SHATIL and **Dr. Rania Okby**, first female Bedouin physician, 7 p.m., Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View. Sponsored by New Israel Fund of Canada. Register at nifcan.org.

Wednesday, Nov. 12

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Shabbat and holidays: Creating islands in time," Baycrest Terrace Synagogue, 55 Ameer Ave. 8 p.m. Free. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

SONG OF SONGS
Hana Werner discusses "Scroll of Ruth," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. $10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

LIFE ON CAMPUS
Marc Newburgh, executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto, author **Nora Gold, Rabbi Adam Cutler, Prof. Martin Lockshin** discuss "Life on the university campus: A safe haven or a hotbed of anti-Israel activity?" Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. No charge.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

OBSERVING SHMITTA
Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon discusses "How to observe shmitta and why it matters," 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. info@torahinmotion.org.

REBBE
Joseph Telushkin, author of *Rebbe*, discusses "Who is the most influential rabbi in modern history?" 8 p.m., Grand Luxe, 3125 Bayview Ave. $15. Register at www.telushkinevent.ca

NAOMI RAGEN
Naomi Ragen discusses her newest book, *The Sisters Weiss*, 7:30 p.m., Pride of Israel Synagogue, 59 Lissom Cres. Sponsored by Na'amat Canada's Club Aviva. For tickets, www.naamattoronto.com or 416-636-5425.

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME
Goldie Plotkin leads a 6-week discussion of *Make Yourself at Home* by **Sarah Chana Radcliffe,** 9:15 a.m., Chabad of Markham. 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

A TASTE OF JUDAISM
Rabbi Micah Streiffer leads a 3-week course on "A taste of Judaism," Nov. 12, 19, 26 at 6 p.m. at Temple Kol Ami. Free. RSVP 905-709-2620, ext. 3.

Thursday, Nov. 13

FOUR MODERN THINKERS
Rabbi Michael Stroh discusses "Four modern religious thinkers you never heard of," Nov. 13-Dec. 4, 10:30 a.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Association of Jewish Libraries, Ontario Chapter, presents "Literary resources on collaboration," 7 p.m., Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.

BEST JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews the five best recent Jewish books. Nov. 13, *Maimonides: Life and Thought*, by **Moshe Halbertal,** 7:30 p.m.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Widows and widowers over 65: A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts Nov. 6, 2:30 p.m.
- The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women to learn how to express anger. Starts Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
- Adult Children Losing a Parent: A 6-session group for adults who have recently lost a parent. Starts Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
- High-conflict divorce: A workshop for parents, not for people in an abusive situation. Nov. 6, 6:30 p.m.
- Let's be blunt: A forum for parents on teens and drug and alcohol use/abuse: Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. Free but registration required. **Tanya Levy** 416-631-5817.
- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: A 4-session group for parents. Call for pre-group assessment, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215. Starts Nov. 20, 7 p.m.
- Beyond the chuppah, becoming a couple: A 2-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Nov. 23 and Nov. 30, 11 a.m.- 3:30 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue.
- Demystifying Alzheimers and dementia: A workshop for anyone wanting to know more about dementia. Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents.
Lynda Fishman discusses "Repairing rainbows and the significance of loss."
Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich will lead a short healing service, Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Memoir/Legacy Writing workshop, led by **Liz Pearl,** 1-2:30 p.m., Nov. 18, 25, Dec. 2. Register by Nov. 13, 416-924-6211, ext. 0. $50.

Pharmaceutical counselling clinic with pharmacist **Allan Rothman,** Nov. 12, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Free.

- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 11, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "Ariel Sharon: One of the most controversial men in Israeli history," 10 a.m.; Nov. 13, lecture on "How to manage on a low income," 1:30 p.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors. Jack Pinkus** discusses "Safe medication use." Breakfast at 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Ave. Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- **Osnat Lippa** presents "The genius of Michelangelo," Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 1 p.m.
- Stroke recovery and Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 a.m.
- Drop-in duplicate bridge, Thursdays 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Is true psychotherapy depicted in movies," Dec. 3 and 17, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *The World Knew: Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity* is on display at the Al Green Theatre, Nov. 4-6, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Tickets on sale now for *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org.
- Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles. Nov. 10, "Beatlemania in America," 7 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *As Seen Through These Eyes*, Nov. 9, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Hilary Helstein.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Remembrance Day Ceremony Nov. 11, starts at 10:50 a.m.
- **Ian Leventhal** discusses a $2 billion project to preserve and develop the historic Jewish district of Shanghai, Nov. 13, 1:30 p.m.
- Teen time. A program for kids in grades 7-8, sponsored by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Nov. 23, 1 p.m. Email Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Beginner and intermediate mah-jong, Jan. 13- Feb. 17, 1-3 p.m.
- Ceramics classes for all levels start Jan. 7.
- Art classes for young adults (25-45 years) Jan. 5-March 23, 8 p.m.
- **Steve Rose** teaches "What would Kandisnsky do?" Jan. 8-March 12, 1-4 p.m. ■

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WRY BREAD

Facebook fed up

David Levine

Dear Alan,

I've left for work. I can't take any more. I love you, but you need to accept that your addiction is real. I know you think your actions don't affect anyone but you, but they have consequences that we both have to deal with. You used to be so young and energetic – we both were! – but we're both so exhausted now that I can barely remember that feeling. I'm afraid you're going to have to choose: it's either me or your Facebook feed.

I'm not asking for much. Just stop checking Facebook in bed. No smartphones, tablets, phablets, e-readers or laptops. For the thousandth time: I can tell when a screen is on at night. It emits light.

Last night I snuck a tape recorder into bed. I'm sorry – but no matter how many times I bring it up, you still say I'm "exaggerating." So when I got out of bed (at 4:55 this morning), I transcribed it all. Here it is, Alan. Here's why we don't sleep anymore. I hope that now you'll believe me and we can start to set our marriage on the right track.

11:48 p.m. I turned the lights out. You were still online.

11:53 p.m. OK, I'll just finish reading this article then I'm shutting it off. Good night.

11:58 p.m. That's so cool – honey, we should eat more turmeric. I don't know what it is, but it's like a super-hero food or something. Can you get some? Do we have a shopping list?

12:03 a.m. OK, there's 41 different shopping list apps. How many different kinds of lettuce do we buy? Because the free version of this one only lets you choose two kinds per trip – and I don't pay for apps.

12:21 a.m. Whoa. Did you read about this Jian Ghomeshi thing? That guy should've stuck with Moxy Fruvous. Remember them, honey? "Once I Was the King of Spain?" No? Are you asleep?

12:27 a.m. Do you think people are consciously choosing whether or not they use the Oxford comma, or is the whole world just chaos?

12:41-1:13 (You talked about hockey for 32 minutes. I chose not to transcribe it, for the sake of our marriage.)

1:21 a.m. What? Are you freaking serious?! Rogers says we've used up 85 per cent of our data already. Liars.

1:34 a.m. The Greens got that new kitchen. It's nice. Granite and stainless. Ha! Look at this picture – look at the counter you can totally see the reflection of that little umbrella flash thing for photos. Did they take professional photos of their own kitchen?? What would that cost?

1:52 a.m. Jenny and Benny aren't going to vaccinate!? I never thought they were that stupid, did you? People who don't understand what a vaccine safety net is shouldn't be allowed to put their own kids in seatbelts. I'm kidding. Mostly.

2:03 a.m. Oh my god. Barry just posted this completely racist article. Know what he wrote? "Finally, some common sense." I'm gonna comment. Should I comment?

2:06 a.m. There. Should I press "post?" I don't wanna start a whole thing.

2:14 a.m. Honey, if we ever redo our kitchen, let's also get an umbrella-flashy thing.

2:23 a.m. OK, I commented on Barry's racist post. But should it say "misguided" instead of "complete ignorance"?

2:41 a.m. Did you know that – oh, sorry! Sorry. Go back to sleep. Ssshh. Ssshhh. Sorry.

2:44 a.m. Ebola is a funny word, when you say it slowly. Ebola. Ebola. Eeee-booowwwwwlllllaaa.

2:56 a.m. The house down the street went for almost 15 per cent over asking! I mean, they have a new deck, and the realtor with the billboard. What's her name? Was it Anne or Anna?

3:07 a.m. Did you know we could rent a billboard for $500 a week? I thought it would be more. Do you think that includes printing?

3:14 a.m. Oh! Eric's online. I'm gonna say hi. (typing:) Hey Eric. Eric says hey.

3:16 He's asking what we're up to. What should I say, sweetie? Oh, sorry. Are you asleep? ■

Family Moments

Mazel Tov on the celebration of your

60th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Philip & Annette Schenker

With much love from your children and their spouses: Esther & Robert, Murray & Lucie, Richard & Tammy and your grandchildren and their spouses: Aron & Shani, Amir & Leah, Chani & Yosef, Tali & Yona, Nosson, Shira, Joanne & Greg, Nathan, Carly, Hailey, Zachary and your 14 great grandchildren. May we celebrate many more years of happiness and good health together!

Mazel tov to Zav on your graduation from University of Waterloo. With Love from your family.

Mazel tov to Max Erenberg, 14, Thornhill, for his first-place win in the International Young Reporters' environmental category. Max is shown with Bubbie Ellen Erenberg.

Mazel tov and love to Etta & Jerry Gross, the golden couple who celebrated 65 years together on Oct. 29. Love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

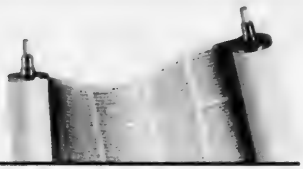
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב

Parshah

Vayera | Genesis 18:1 - 22:24



Rabbi Aaron Katchen explores the danger of Sodom and Gomorrah
Rabbi Michal Shekel sees an example of great courage in the story of Lot's wife
Rabbi Howard Morrison uncovers a parallel between this week's Torah reading and Kristallnacht

Aaron Katchen

"Because the cry of [the victims of] Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their [the perpetrators'] sin is very grievous." – Genesis 18:20

"There are four character types among people. One who says, 'What's mine is mine and what's yours is yours' is of average character, and some say, this is the character of Sodom. [One who says] 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is mine' is unlearned. [One who says] 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is yours' is pious. [One who says] 'What's yours is mine and what's mine is mine' is wicked." – Mishnah Avot 5:13

The Torah does not address the nature of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. This Mishnah indicates how the rabbis understood their sin. There are two opinions around "What's mine is mine and what's yours is yours," – one neutral, the other base. Although referring to property, the rabbis see this idea as the basis for human interaction, the litmus test for a healthy community. The wicked and righteous characteristics are often self-evident in people, and we are either drawn to or repelled by their behaviour. But the people of Sodom created a false sense of justice, which lulled people into thinking their actions were good. Sodom uses a false morality to inculcate the destruction of kindness and our shared obligation for humanity.

By building fences around what is "mine" under the false pretense of protecting what is "yours," we close our hearts, minds and hands to the other. We can ignore their plight as their own and see their suffering as warranted, and we use our sense of justice to justify it. At times, things that appear neutral on the surface are often the most dangerous. This was the danger of Sodom, and why the need was so strong to destroy that mindset. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto and director, Ask Big Questions Fellowship, for Hillel International.

Michal Shekel

Why did Lot's wife look back? Midrash Genesis Rabbah makes her out to be a reluctant participant from the very beginning. Lot, intending to offer hospitality to his guests, asks his wife to prepare a feast. She does so grudgingly, borrowing salt from neighbours and intentionally alerting them to presence of the messengers. Rabbi Yitzhak explains her fate is "because she sinned through salt."

In this midrash, Lot's wife is the opposite of the hospitable matriarch Sarah. But these two women, and a third woman in this parshah, Hagar, have something in common.

All three women have to deal with the potential loss of their children. Tradition holds that Sarah died of shock upon learning of the Akedah. Hagar leaves her son Ishmael under some bushes and moves away so she will not see him die. Lot had two married daughters in Sodom whose husbands did not take seriously Lot's warning to leave town (Genesis 19:14). Lot's wife had little time to prepare for the fact that she would never see those two daughters again. The same maternal emotions that made Hagar turn away caused Lot's wife to look back with concern.

Lot's wife is turned into a *netsiv melach*, a pillar of salt. *Netsiv* (pillar) is from the same root as *nitsavim*, meaning "stand before" or "stand over." In parshat Nitsavim, we stand before God to enter the covenant. In this week's parshah, the verb root *n-ts-v* is used in describing God's messengers as they appear before Abraham. *N-ts-v* implies a sacred aspect to the standing.

Furthermore, since ancient times, salt has been a physical preservative, a ritual cleanser and a symbol of a binding covenant. Life isn't fair, and the sacred isn't necessarily benign. In looking back, Lot's wife committed a courageous act, as holy as it was tragic. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the spiritual leader at Or Hadash Synagogue, Newmarket, Ont.

Howard Morrison

In Parshat Vayera, we read about many of the tests Abraham endured in becoming the founding patriarch of the Jewish People. One involved how he would respond to God's plan to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Torah makes it clear he was being tested, since God revealed His plan to him. Ultimately, if 10 righteous people could be found, God wouldn't destroy the cities. In some midrashim, the source for requiring 10 for a minyan harkens back to this episode, suggesting that 10 righteous people have the potential to transform an entire community. What's perhaps most noteworthy is that this test shows concern and compassion for strangers, people and communities that Abraham doesn't even recognize. His particularistic covenant with God compels him to speak out for all humanity.

This year, Parshat Vayera will be read on the 76th anniversary of Kristallnacht, which transpired Nov. 9, 1938. Today, we still ask the unanswerable question: Where were the Abrahams of the world to speak out and confront the evil befalling Jews in eastern Europe? As Elie Wiesel has suggested, the sin of indifference pervaded the world at the time. Our first patriarch, Abraham, a role model for all time, did not sit idly by. He did not commit the sin of indifference when God revealed His plan for Sodom and Gomorrah.

This test is one for us as well. It's easy to understand that Jews will come together to speak out and confront injustices perpetrated against Israel and Jews around the world. We were united this past summer during Israel's war with Hamas and when anti-Semitic events took place around the globe. The story of Abraham, however, compels us to confront evil wherever it takes place, regardless of whom the innocent victim might be. If we expect the world to voice concern on Jewish issues, we must also voice concern on issues that are universal and demand compassion, justice and righteousness. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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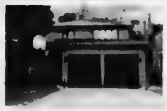

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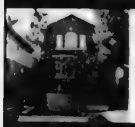

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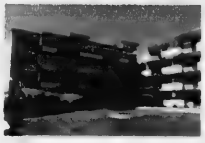

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By moving further afield to find affordable places to live, Jews lose easy access to the city's Jewish institutions.

Connecting Jewish families across the city is a challenge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"Sixty per cent of Jewish kids in Greater Vancouver don't go to Jewish camp, supplementary school or day school," Brodt says. "Our collective goal should be to go out and meet these people, wherever they are, and connect with them, showing them that we care about them and their kids."

He's done precisely that at RJDS, where losses in recent years have flattened out and the school now has 90 students. It has a capacity of 130.

"We have to go out there and make the school a place where they want to be," Brodt says. "Whether you're a synagogue or a school, you can't just open your doors and expect people to come in anymore. You have to go out and sell people on what you do, find out what's important to them. This is Western Canada, where the Jewish community has always had a reputation for being less connected and less affiliated than your standard Montreal or Toronto community."

The Jewish federation and its partner associations have created several initiatives to reach Jews in outlying areas. The Jewish Community Foundation just funded East Side Jews so that Jewish families can come together around Jewish holidays and for Shabbat. The expanded PJ Library program provides ongoing Jewish education for families with young kids, even if they're not close to a community institution. And in Richmond, the Richmond Hub opened last June to bring Jewish social services to the city. It's a common office and meeting space where Jewish organizations can serve their clients without them having to cross the bridge into Vancouver.

And that bridge, while small in physical terms, is a massive psychological barrier for Jews who live on either side of it.

Despite the cost of living in British Columbia, the Jewish population grew 14.2 per cent between 2001 and 2011, Rivkin says. "That's a faster increase than any other city in Canada, and our population is now at 26,750."

But there's also been a growth in the rate of poverty within the Jewish community, from one in seven to one in six. More people are coming to the Jewish community for assistance, she notes, whether it's camp scholarships, support for JCC memberships or for basic needs.

Rabbi Pacht says he'd love to see Vancouver become a workable place for young Jewish families. "It may mean changing people's mindsets to the idea that it's OK to raise a family in a townhouse or apartment, as opposed to in a single detached home," he suggests. As he looks to the future of the frum community, he suspects growth will come from within by connecting more people to Torah and Orthodoxy.

"Vancouver has a very connected community between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and unaffiliated Jews, with far more overlap and interplay between different segments of the community than, say, in Toronto or New York," Rabbi Pacht reflects. "Here, Conservative Jews and Orthodox rabbis are attending the same bar mitzvahs, weddings and events. I think there's a real thirst for genuine Torah in the community and, with the right group of people spearheading outreach, we can create more and more Orthodox Jews from the community in Vancouver, families that may not have grown up frum but are not averse to growing, and are here to stay." ■

Sarah Beutel: New president 'grew up with Na'amat'

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

In September, Sarah Beutel became the national president of Na'amat Canada at the organization's convention in Ottawa.

A native of Montreal, Beutel, 46, has been director of community collaboration at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa since 2009. She has lived in the national capital since attending Carleton University, where she earned a master's degree in public administration, after graduating from McGill University. She attended Jewish People's and Peretz Schools and Bialik High School.

She and husband Steven Morgan have four children aged 9 to 18.

The Beutel name in Montreal is synonymous with community service and philanthropy. What was it like growing up in such a family and what influence has that had on your life?

I have always been proud of my family's legacy of community service and philanthropy. My parents (Judy and Morton), late grandparents, my late Uncle Irwin (who passed away in August) and others are a source of pride and inspiration for me. They were strong role models who taught me the value of caring for others, of tzedakah and social action, through their untiring commitment and dedication to the Jewish community in Canada and in Israel.

From a young age, I was taught the importance of standing up and taking action for what is important to you. The lesson that I took away from them was that it is not only important to count oneself as part of the Jewish community, it's also incumbent upon each one of us to actively help shape the community and take part in activities that help bolster Jewish life if we want to ensure a Jewish future for our children.

Na'amat Canada is probably not well known to younger generations. Historically, it was associated with Labour Zionism and originally called Pioneer Women. What is its relevance today, in this country, to women your age and younger?

Na'amat Israel (sister organization of Na'amat Canada) is one of the most important and relevant organizations in Israel today, working to improve the status of women and their families. Na'amat programs and service offerings span the State of Israel and provide support to hundreds of thousands of people of all ages and all walks of life. Na'amat is also a strong force for social change, as it actively promotes women's and other important issues through the legal and political systems in Israel.

Na'amat Canada continues to be active, and has many longtime, as well as new members and supporters, across the country, who believe strongly in Na'amat's mission and values. This is despite the fact that the world is rapidly changing around us, and it has been challenging for Jewish membership organizations such as ours to adapt. It is true that it's harder to get the message out to the younger generation today, as there are so many other charities, causes and activities competing for their attention. To meet these challenges, Na'amat Canada is focused on looking ahead at ways in which we can inspire the next generation of women, and ensure that Na'amat Canada continues to be a strong organization.

We have had some great successes in attracting women with young families looking for meaningful ways to become involved in their Jewish communities and for ways to support Israel. We seek to build on these successes.

How long have you been associated with Na'amat and what attracted you to the organization, besides family tradition?

I have been an active member of Na'amat Canada for around 18 years. While I grew up with Na'amat – my mother was the Na'amat Montreal executive director for 30 years – my own personal connection to the organization started when I moved to Ottawa and

Sarah Beutel

was newly married. At that point, Na'amat Ottawa was starting up a new chapter, and I was looking for ways to get involved in my new Jewish community.

What attracted to me to Na'amat, and continues to be an inspiration every single day, is the important mission and values of the organization. Na'amat seeks to care for, to strengthen, empower and assist women in so many ways in Israel, and in our own communities as well. It is women helping women, Jewish people helping to strengthen the Jewish state and our local communities, and a network of women from countries all over the world bound together in this important mission.

How has Na'amat changed over the years, in terms of its mission and activities? How successful has Na'amat been in attracting a new generation? Does it vary across Canada?

Na'amat's mission and values have not changed over its 90 years in Canada. What has changed is the way in which we have gone about achieving our mission. The types of activities and fundraisers have changed with the times. The ways we communicate with each other across the country and within the international movement have also evolved along with new technologies.

As I mentioned before, attracting the next generation of Na'amat members is one of our top priorities. While we have new clubs of young women such as in Toronto, this is definitely one of the challenges facing our organization as we look across the country and ahead to the future. The large number of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations vying for the next generation's attention, talents and dollars is staggering. However, building on Na'amat's many strengths, we are working to attract younger members to our organization and to support our cause.

How have you managed to balance your family, professional and communal lives?

This balance is definitely hard to achieve, and it's a work in progress. It is a good thing that I like to be busy! It is also a good thing that I inherited the "highly organized" gene! I like to make time for things that are important to me, and I know that life is short, and I try to get it all in while I can. I am fortunate to have a supportive husband and family. This has allowed me to balance full-time work, family life and volunteer roles.

What does directing "community collaboration" entail? Is this a recently created position and why was it necessary considering that Ottawa is a small Jewish community?

In my professional life, I am fortunate to work for the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. My main role is to manage several of the federation's local and Israel programs. A lot of the programs and activities of the federation are done through working together with other local Jewish organizations to strengthen the Jewish community. This is not a new position, although the title itself is newly minted! Despite its relatively small size, the Jewish community of Ottawa has a large number of Jewish organizations, and by working together, we can all achieve so much more. ■

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Backstory

GERALD POSNER

Forty years after his death, Morris Neaman of Winnipeg still exerts a profound effect in the heart and mind of Toronto's Henry Bernick.

Bernick, just turned 90, was raised in what was then Poland, now Belarus. His ancestors had made a mark in the area of what was known as Zelwa, in Poland in the milling and grain business. That laid the foundation for what later was the key to getting into Canada in 1939, just two months ahead of World War II and at a time when Bernick was all of 15 years old. The family settled in July 1939 in Essa Township near Cookstown, Ont. Shortly after, they moved to nearby Ivy, Ont.

Soon, young Bernick left to study engineering at the University of Toronto. Within five years of his arrival in Canada, he married Esther Starkman. This year, Henry and Esther celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary with their three children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

As Bernick says, perhaps none of the material success he has had would ever have happened were it not for the man he calls his mentor, Morris Neaman.

The Neaman – Bernick connection began simply enough given that one man was in Toronto and the other in Winnipeg and 25 years separated them in age.

Upon graduation, Bernick could not get a job, so he went to work at his uncle's tanning factory in Midland, Ont. Bernick and his wife invested her inheritance in the factory, but even so the business was failing and he realized they needed help. So, he contacted the Sable Group in Montreal, where Neaman was a partner with Joseph Kerbel. It was not long before Neaman met Bernick.

In the early 1950s, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation was established by the government. Neaman suggested to Henry that he get into land development in the Barrie, Ont., area where Bernick was living. They would be partners and if at any time Bernick wanted to leave the partnership, all Neaman wanted was his original investment returned. So, Kerbel, Neaman and Bernick put up $1,000 each and off they went.

> *Neaman's impact continues to this day*

The business flourished until Bernick's group became the biggest home builders in Barrie. The group invested heavily in land development in Mississauga and Toronto. Neaman also persuaded Bernick to enter the world of finance. This new venture was significant enough that the group owned three finance companies in Canada in the early 1960s – one of which was in Winnipeg, allowing Bernick to learn at the feet of his mentor.

Over a period of 27 years from 1947 until Neaman died in 1974, Bernick involved himself in manufacturing, property development and finance companies. His success was due to the influence of Neaman.

Bernick says Neaman's impact continues to this day. As Henry puts it so aptly in his autobiography *A Package of Matches*, "since his death in 1974, I have continued to be profoundly influenced by all of the knowledge and wisdom Mr. Neaman imparted on me. It is hard to find the words to describe how invaluable our relationship has been for him and me."

Bernick points out that after Neaman's death, he continued to have a warm and successful relationship with Neaman's grandsons, Marvin and Barry Shenkarow, the former owners of the Winnipeg Jets hockey team.

The other great lesson Neaman taught Bernick was giving back. Bernick must have been an excellent student when he studied in the charity class that Neaman taught. In 2011, Bernick donated $1.5 million to Georgian College in Barrie for the establishment of the Henry Bernick School of Entrepreneurship.

Today, as he hits 90, sitting in his office with the large framed picture of Neaman right above his desk, Bernick reflects on his well traveled life, which was changed and elevated owing to Morris Neaman. It's a legacy that any family would love to have. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL SOCIETY

Ruth Mandelker	Oct 9/14	333 Clark Avenue West
Ronald Rosenberg	Oct 12/14	110 Promenade Circle
Elaine Markowitz	Oct 18/14	51 Pico Crescent
Geza Szamosi	Oct 24/14	280 Simcoe Street

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Would like to thank their family and friends for the outpouring of love and generosity at this very sad time.

Your words of condolence were comforting and heartfelt.

With gratitude

Sarah Mayer
Bernie, Andrea, Riley & Dustin
Simmy, Laurie, Ben & Andi
Karen, Michael, Matt, Noah & Drew

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Paula Hans Schafer	Oct 11/14	5460 Yonge Street
Mary Benadiba	Oct 10/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Ida Abrams	Oct 12/14	3036 Bathurst Street
Esther Bernick	Oct 10/14	3800 Yonge Street
Debra Hershoran	Oct 12/14	1 Benvenuto Place
Eugenia (Jenica) Bercovi	Oct 13/14	718 Sheppard Avenue West
Alexander (Sasha) Sucher	Oct 14/14	50 Disera Drive
David Matyas	Oct 14/14	333 Clark Avenue West
Tamara Dihtiar	Oct 13/14	175 Cummer Avenue
Celia Stein	Oct 13/14	2045 Lakeshore Blvd. W.
Lawrence Lobel	Oct 14/14	173 Brownridge Drive
Sydney Fox	Oct 16/14	120 Collinson Blvd.
Hella Friedmann	Oct 15/14	85 Skymark Drive
Eric Platt	Oct 15/14	22 Shallmar Blvd.
Buschie Kamin	Oct 14/14	150 Heath Street West
Nellie Sheriff	Oct 15/14	191 Old Forest Hill Road
Sylvia Marks	Oct 17/14	65 Spring Garden Ave.
Jay Alter	Oct 17/14	152 Brownridge Drive
Rita Shwartz	Oct 17/14	39 Crosby Avenue
Maureen De Freitas	Oct 18/14	33 Cedar Springs Grove
Kay Kaplan	Oct 18/14	340 McCowan Road
George Swimmer	Oct 16/14	784 Centre Street
Joni DeBora	Oct 18/14	16 Little Natalie Court
Ita Vital	Oct 19/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Anne Moses	Oct 20/14	65 Skymark Drive
David Bruce Shapiro	Oct 19/14	164 Cumberland St.
Harry Rubin	Oct 22/14	175 Cumberland Street
Sam Wagman	Oct 22/14	18 Lower Village Gate
Shirley Ogden	Oct 22/14	240 Heath Street West
Margareta Albescu	Oct 22/14	106 Benson Avenue
Lawrie Rotenberg	Oct 24/14	16 Albert Street
Kurt Weinberg	Oct 23/14	4266 Bathurst Street
Tillie Lubek	Oct 24/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Molly Franklin	Oct 24/14	170 Red Maple Road

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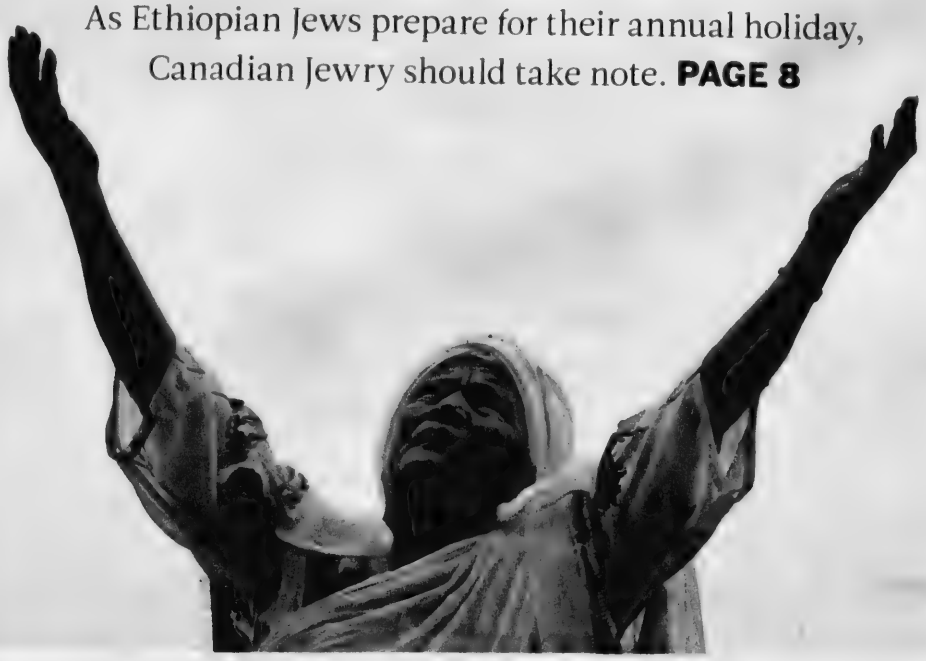
'Sigd kept us strong'

As Ethiopian Jews prepare for their annual holiday, Canadian Jewry should take note. **PAGE 8**



Tension in Jerusalem
Is this the beginning of the third intifadah? Or is it too early to tell?
Commentary PAGE 40

Painting returned
Art Gallery of Hamilton returns Dutch portrait stolen by the Nazis in 1940. **PAGE 21**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:29 p.m.	5:33 p.m.
Montreal	4:07 p.m.	5:12 p.m.
Toronto	4:35p.m.	5:38 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:28 p.m.	5:37 p.m.
Calgary	4:31 p.m.	5:42 p.m.
Vancouver	4:13 p.m.	5:22 p.m.

'Lawfare' group to back Israel

Lawyers and legal researchers plan to use courts to support the Jewish state. **PAGE 19**

'Democratizing the shidduch'

Jewish hookup app JSwipe raises a host of new questions. **PAGE 30**

Jazz musician channels history

Steve Koven recorded latest CD on ex-Imperial Room piano. **PAGE 45**

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You can't be a Nazi and coach kids' hockey, and flying the haredi skies

Pro-Hitler coach axed in B.C.

A kids' hockey coach in North Delta, B.C., was fired Nov. 1 after his Facebook page, which has since been taken down, was discovered to be filled with pro-Nazi material, including a photo of Hitler with the caption, "Adolf Hitler: the greatest story never told." Christopher Maximilian Sandau, 33, had been coaching players in grades 6 to 9 for the North Delta Minor Hockey Association. Sandau told *Surrey Now* he doesn't believe the Holocaust occurred, but didn't think it was fair he was let go, because he never imposed his views on the kids. He admitted his ideas were controversial, though. "I get it. It's a really touchy subject." Said one parent: "You can't be a Nazi and coach kids' hockey."

Always read the safety megillah

Tablet magazine released a withering parody of an El Al safety video after recent reports of flight delays due to haredi men refusing to take their assigned seats next to women. The video, which says the airline's "first commitment is to safety – your spiritual safety," advises that in the "unlikely event" a flight attendant insists that a haredi man sit next to a woman, he should use the "full body protection vest" under his seat, as well as its attached shofar to alert the crew to any dangers. It adds that safety rules are conveniently located in a megillah located in the pocket of all seat backs. "Should all else fail, please remove it and recite the necessary prayers," the video concludes. "After all, in the sky, you are very close to God."

El Al is committed to your spiritual well-being.

ADL names Obama aide as new head

The Anti-Defamation League's new national director will be social entrepreneur Jonathan Greenblatt, a special assistant to U.S. President Barack Obama, who earlier in his career co-founded the socially conscious bottled water brand Ethos, which he sold to Starbucks. Greenblatt, 43, has an MBA from Northwestern University and will succeed Abraham Foxman, who last winter announced he will be stepping down in July 2015. Foxman, 74, has been the ADL's national director since 1987. ■

Inside today's edition

Rabbi2Rabbi	4	Comment	10	Jewish Life	45	Parshah	55
Perspectives	7	News	12	What's New	52	Q&A	58
Cover Story	8	International	40	Social Scene	54	Backstory	59

Gematria

4 years

The sentence given to a 27-year-old ambulance driver for torching a kosher grocery in a Jewish area of Paris in July during riots related to the Gaza war.

$58,000

The price the Art Gallery of Hamilton paid for *Portrait of a Lady* by Johannes Verspronck in 1987. It returned the Nazi-looted painting to its owner's heirs last week.

Quotable

I was naive enough to believe ethnic nationalism was finished in Quebec.

— Human rights lawyer Julius Grey on the PQ's charter of values. See full Q&A on p. 58.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

An online guide to Holocaust restitution resources by Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

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Letters to the Editor

Affordable schools needed

Rabbi Dow Marmur lists low birth rates, intermarriage and anti-Semitism as some of the factors that could eventually lead to the extinction of the Jewish people ("We need more Jews," Oct. 30).

There is, however, a factor not mentioned on the esteemed rabbi's list. Until our first two children became of school age, we would never have thought of it, but it relates to another ongoing discussion in the Jewish community that *The CJN* has covered widely.

Specifically, we have had several friends who have two children tell us that they would like a third child but the cost of Jewish schooling renders this financially impossible or impractical.

We are blessed with three children. Our house is wild and crazy, but as our baby approaches two years old, we often wonder about having a fourth child. There are many reasons why we have chosen to stop at three, and frankly, the cost of Jewish education is one of them.

The Jewish community has done an excellent job of promoting Israel, for example, through philanthropists who have funded the wonderful Birthright program. What is urgently needed is a similar type of philanthropic endeavour to assist with Jewish day school funding.

There are many Jewish people who want more kids, but decide to limit their numbers because Jewish schools are too expensive and this is very sad, especially given that, as Rabbi Marmur says, we need more Jews.

Leigh A. Lampert
Toronto

Lice are not the problem

Your article on "lice ladies" ("Lice ladies remove stigma of annoying pests," Oct. 8) deserves some comment to more accurately describe some of the issues.

First of all, I do not believe that it is necessary to hire anyone to treat this condition. Proper application of some of the standard remedies are extremely effective and extremely safe. In 38 years of practice I have never seen someone react to this treatment. There is almost no evidence that natural products are effective in the treatment of lice.

There is absolutely no need to remove a child from the classroom when the diagnosis is made. It only stigmatizes them. Proper treatment renders the child non-contagious, and there is very little evidence for the need to remove nits prior to return to school.

Lastly, if "Nurse Shelley" is indeed a nurse, she does not show up on the registry of the College of Nurses of Ontario. I believe that "Nurse Shelley" should dissuade people from calling her that, lest they think she is really a nurse.

Dr. Howard Bargman
Associate professor of dermatology, University of Toronto

Divorced from reality

Zach Paikin promotes the partisan fiction that Canada will remain Israel's best friend on the world stage, no matter which party is in charge ("Jews should think twice about supporting the Tories," cjnews.com). But this fantasy has no foundation in reality.

Canada stood by silently and often participated in votes hostile to Israel during the Liberal years. Recently, when federal Liberal candidate Darshan Kang appeared as a speaker at a pro-Hamas rally, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau was silent.

When he speaks about Israel, Trudeau calls for a return to the honest broker tradition in Canadian foreign policy. We all know what he really means, that between Israel and Hamas, Canada should seek a "middle ground."

By contrast, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have steadfastly supported Israel the entire time they have been in power. Israel ultimately needs friends with backbone willing to support her whenever the international community isolates and condemns her.

David Posluns
Toronto

Thank you, Lauren

The story that profoundly touched my heart was Lauren Kramer's "The warm buzz of memory" (Oct. 23) as she eloquently describes the long-gone image of her beloved parents, an image that resonates with many readers who have also lost loved ones.

It is a powerful reminder, as she says, "that life, though fleeting, can be very, very good." Thank you Lauren.

Vivianne Silver
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number. More letters can be found this week at cjnews.com.*

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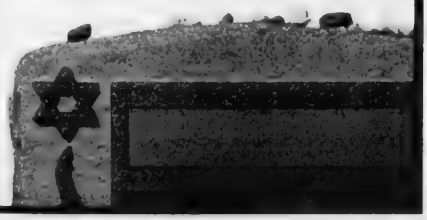

RABBI-2-RABBI

Brother. Sister. Family. Amcha.

We are often united in times of crisis. The challenge is to build on that strength and not retreat to our separate corners when the crisis passes.

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: Rabbi Fishman, I am very grateful to *The Canadian Jewish News* for introducing us to one another. Even from a distance, the devotion of your rabbinate rings through so clearly. You have mentioned previously that our monthly "conversations" are the first real exchange you've had with a Reform rabbi. I wonder if you feel there is more common ground now under our feet than when we first began our correspondence.

Rabbi Fishman: I, too, feel a deep appreciation to *The CJN* for the opportunity to engage in this forum.

The truth of the matter is that at the outset of our dialogue, I was not sure which direction it would take. I felt an intuition that it is easier to break down rather than build up, and I worried that if we focused on our differences, we would not succeed to inspire, engage or lead. Rather, I felt that if we focused on what we have in common, we might realize that while differences are there, perhaps we share more than that which divides us.

Rabbi Splansky: This summer, the Toronto Jewish community held a memorial service for the three Israeli teenagers who were kidnapped and subsequently killed. An impressive crowd gathered in the extended sanctuary of an Orthodox shul. I was invited to join a Conservative rabbi and an Orthodox rabbi on the bimah. The Orthodox rabbi picked up on the message of Rachel Naftali, the mother of one of the boys, who spoke about *achdut*, unity. I believe people heard her loud and clear.

Later, as I walked back to my car, I heard a woman calling out, "Rabbi! Rabbi!" I turned to see an Orthodox family packed into a passing car. The mother offered big smiles and big compliments through her open window. She clearly wanted me to hear her nice words about what I had offered from the bimah, but more than that, I believe she wanted her children in the back seat – boys and girls – to hear her calling me "rabbi."

I admire her for it. Things are changing.

Rabbi Fishman: My teacher, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, once wrote, "Can we see the presence of God in the face of a stranger?"

I think our dialogue together has moved us beyond being strangers, perhaps even beyond being mere colleagues. I find that so much of the fear and trepidation people experience of the "other" is due to the fact that they have not sat down and had lunch with one another.

Social interactions – even simply listening to a rabbi on a bimah inside a different synagogue – can sometimes be all it takes to expose us to the face of the other. If we can look into another's eyes when we speak to them, I would suggest we will not only see the presence of God, but deeper still, find a reflection of ourselves.

Rabbi Splansky: One God. One Torah. One People.

More often than not, we get it together in the face of a crisis. But all too often, we then return to our separate corners and carry on with a Jewish life apart from one another. It may feel safer, somehow, for each circle to stay behind its own synagogue doors, but everyone knows the truth: we are stronger together.

How can the talmudic conclusion of "*Eilu v'eilu*" – "Both these and these are the words of the living God" come to be the dominant voice?

We don't have to be the same. Regional and halachic differences have always been the spice of Jewish life. But when we see a fellow Jew, thoughts of differentiation must be secondary to the overwhelming thought: "Brother. Sister. Family. Amcha."

Rabbi Fishman: The off-Broadway show *Soul Brother* recently played in Montreal. One scene in the play that was particularly poignant for me was Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

In the scene, Rabbi Carlebach asks his teacher how he can make a difference to the Jewish People, how he will be able to express the love he feels for the Judaism that matters so much to him. The Lubavitcher Rebbe's response was: "One, by one, by one, by one."

We are so much more than the sum of our denominations. Yes, we are truly "Brother. Sister. Family. Amcha." ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Lest we forget

Former Toronto mayor Phil Givens, centre, stands in front of a Jewish war veterans memorial during the Remembrance Day ceremony held by the General Wingate Branch 256 of the Royal Canadian Legion, Nov. 11, 1984.

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

SEEJN | Ambassadorial endorsement

JONNI SUPER PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

Canada's ambassador to Israel, Vivian Bercovici, right, joined Gary Tile, executive director of OneFamily Fund Canada and 47 hikers from Toronto and Ottawa who were part of OneFamily Fund Canada's annual five-day hike in Israel last month. The hike raises money for victims of terror and war, and strengthens the bond between Canadians and Israelis. Bercovici addressed the hikers and more than 100 Israeli parents who were travelling to a OneFamily retreat for bereaved parents. She thanked OneFamily for the work the organization does and said she is inspired by the courage and strength of the victims.

From Yoni's Desk

Should Jews pray at the Temple Mount?

The attempted assassination of Rabbi Yehuda Glick in Jerusalem on Oct. 29 has reignited debate over access to Har Habayit – the Temple Mount. Rabbi Glick, head of a coalition of groups aiming to win full rights for Jews at the Temple Mount, was shot four times by Mutaz Hijazi, a member of Islamic Jihad with a history of security crimes. (Hijazi was subsequently killed during a shootout with Israeli police.)

Rabbi Glick is recovering – miraculously, by some accounts – at a Jerusalem hospital. In the meantime, tension is mounting on Har Habayit: Israeli police and rioting Palestinians have clashed there in recent days, including inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinians, and the government of Jordan, claim Israeli law enforcement officials entered further into the mosque than they have since 1967; Israeli police deny that, and claim they discovered in the entranceway to the mosque caches of rudimentary weapons.

The latest hostilities on the Temple Mount highlight two connected debates: should Jews be granted the right to pray at the Temple Mount? And if the answer is yes, how should Jews act upon it?

In the hours after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1967, Israeli leaders opted to leave control of the Temple Mount in the hands of Muslim leaders. Had they decided otherwise, they believed, the Six Day War might have turned into a bloodier and extended clash of religions. Ever since, the policy of the government of Israel has been clear: Jews are generally discouraged from visiting the Temple Mount. Those who do ascend to Har Habayit must be accompanied by police, and are not allowed to pray while there.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minster Benjamin Netanyahu argued unequivocally that the rules governing Temple Mount visitation must not be changed. But within his own Likud party and the governing coalition, not everyone agrees: Likud MK Moshe Feiglin entered the Temple Mount in the wake of the attempt on Rabbi Glick's life, while Housing Minister Uri Ariel and Bayit Yehudi chief Naftali Bennett have openly challenged Netanyahu over Har Habayit policy.

And as the political stance regarding the Temple Mount wavers, so too does the religious approach. Many religious leaders continue to profess that Jews should avoid the Temple Mount – a position derived from the biblical laws regarding purity at Judaism's holiest place. Without the requisite religious accoutrements (including a red heifer), the argument goes, Jews may not set foot there. Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef reiterated that position last Friday, suggesting Jews who pray on Har Habayit might be punished with death.

But a growing cohort of rabbis disagree: Rabbi Glick is just one of many religious leaders who suggest Jews can – and should – pray on the Temple Mount. In the wake of his shooting, their ranks appear to be increasing.

Rabbi Glick's opinion isn't to everyone's taste, no doubt, but he did not deserve to be targeted for it. If his actions have revived public debate about how Jews should manage Har Habayit, those questions have been swirling since 1967. All the while, Har Habayit remains effectively off-limits to Jews, so close but so far away. You can see why that's a frustrating reality for so many.

■ — YONI

FEATURE

Integrating Arab Israelis into the high-tech economy

Imad Telhami

Of the many statistics about the economic status of Israel's Arab citizens, the two that concern me most are that Arab citizens make up 20 per cent of the total population (approximately 1.6 million people) but less than one per cent of Israel's high-tech industry. For Israel, this is a serious economic and societal liability. For Arab citizens, it means another generation who will not dare to dream.

During my 25 years at Delta-Galil Textiles, a traditional manufacturing company, we took pride in providing jobs to thousands of people, mostly Arabs, at our factories in the north of Israel and in the role these employees played in the company's success. But as the economy changed and Israel became a startup nation, manufacturing jobs were not able to keep up with the growing income gaps in the country.

Though high-tech was booming, Arab citizens were not integrating into the industry. Dreaming of a major exit or the next world-changing app became a common aspiration among Israeli Jews, but most Arabs were still focused on finding a job, keeping it, and hanging on. Why?

There are many structural answers to this question: a lack of jobs in Israel's periphery where most Arabs live, separate Hebrew and Arab public education streams that put Arabs at a disadvantage in a professional environment, insufficient public transportation, and daycare options that put education and employment beyond the reach of Arab women especially, to name a few.

I come from these communities and was fortunate to have broken through these barriers myself. As a Delta executive, my exposure to business people and practices around the world changed my understanding of limits. I no longer saw a world of Arabs and Jews, minorities and majorities, but a world of people that followed dreams, and those that feared them.

Babcom Centers has grown to 1, 700 employees, 70 per cent of whom are Arab.

By and large, Arab citizens in Israel are the latter. Years of muted aspirations have turned into assumptions about the range of possibility and opportunity available to them. This is to the detriment of a community that needs role models, and to a country that needs the creativity of all its citizens.

When Delta was sold and closed its factory doors in the Galilee, it was a deep hit for this northern part of Israel's periphery. But it was also an opportunity. What if instead of replacing manufacturing jobs, we could bring professional career-building industry to this underdeveloped region? What if Arab women who thought that being a seamstress was their future, could now build business skills and experience? Delta founder Dov Lautman and I set out to create a high-tech enterprise, and revolutionize what the many Arab communities here could imagine.

In 2008 we launched Babcom Centers, a business and software services company, in the Tefen Industrial Park. It was the first ever high-tech company in an Arab area and has since served as a gateway between Israel's economic centre and its periphery, tapping into the country's broad human resources – Arab and Jewish, men and women – as part of Israel's continued growth. (*Babcom* means "Your Gateway" in Arabic).

Today, we have grown to 1,700 employees – 70 per cent Arab, 70 per cent women – who touch nearly every household in Israel through the call-centers alone. Our values are excellence and service and our motto, "Getting Better Every Day," refers to each employee's individual achievements and what we are doing for the country as a whole. We are breaking barriers and instilling hope in a region that needs it. It is the most fun I've ever had in business.

Babcom Centers' success has served as a model for similar businesses that see the benefit and potential in Israel's domestic human resources. The result has been more jobs and more opportunities outside the centre, and a whole generation now aspiring to professional careers in the industry. This is change in the right direction, but I still have bigger dreams.

Israel's economic engine is its start-up economy and the disruptive force of technological entrepreneurship and innovation. Though there are more start-ups per capita than any other country, not a single exit has yet been made by an Arab entrepreneur. I believe such an event would kick-start a wave of higher aspiration in the Arab community as well as cultural and economic change in Israel as a whole.

This year, along with high-tech entrepreneurs Erel Margalit and Chemi Peres, we launched Takwin Labs in Haifa as a start-up incubator for Arab citizens. In Arabic *takwin* means "new beginnings" and "to bring something into life." We completed our first funding round of $4.5 million out of $20 million this September.

By some estimates, Arab startups could grow the Israeli economy as much as $9 billion a year by tapping into the international Arab-speaking market. As you can imagine, I envision more. With Arab role models, investors, and government support, the meaning of economic development in Israel can go hand in hand with interdependent development, where progress in one region, in one sector improves realities for the whole. Moreover, the empowerment of Arab citizens could inspire Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and neighbouring states and serve as a bridge to further the prospects of regional peace. ■

Imad Telhami is chairman of Babcom Centers and Takwin Lab.

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Uniting with Ethiopian Jewry for Sigd holiday

Festival is a gift to the whole Jewish community in the month of Cheshvan

JUDIE ORON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Over the centuries, the history of Ethiopian Jewry (Beta Israel) has been laced with tragedy and persecution. In combating repression, their spiritual leaders fought to keep their members united and steadfast in their beliefs.

The annual Sigd holiday is an important event in the Beta Israel calendar year, and one that did much to keep hope alive – hope that one day the community would return *en masse* to their ancient homeland.

For hundreds of years, Jews in Ethiopia gathered on the 29th day of the Hebrew month of Cheshvan to proceed together up a high mountain, to fast and to pray for that return. The kessim, the spiritual leaders, read throughout the day from their *Orit* (Torah) and led the community in prayer. At sunset, those gathered would all proceed down the mountain to break their fast and to celebrate the giving of the Torah and the renewal of their Covenant with God, as set out in the Book of Nehemiah.

The community paid a high price for its loyalty to Judaism. Over the centuries, the Beta Israel fell prey to many forms of repression. In Gondar province, the anti-Semitic governor, Maj. Melaku Tefera, ordered that the weekly market day be switched to Saturday, thus ruthlessly curtailing the livelihood of thousands of Jews. The teaching of Hebrew was made a punishable act, and young teachers were jailed and often tortured.

"I became bald overnight," Osnako Sendeke, a former Hebrew teacher in Ambover village, said of his first round of torture. His wry grin and pronounced limp reflect the agony that this Prisoner of Zion endured.

"The Sigd gathered us all together. It was a day for us to express the joy of receiving the Torah, a day that kept us strong," Osnako said.

Since their arrival in Israel, the community has been gathering to celebrate the Sigd on Jerusalem's Sherover Promenade in Armon Hanatziv, Talpiot, – a high point that provides a spectacular view of the Old City.

'Wuditu' in Ethiopia. She is the heroine of the writer's book *Cry of the Giraffe.*

The event begins with a procession of the white turbaned *kessoch*, with their colourful umbrellas held high overhead, and is followed by their lengthy reading of religious texts and symbolic teachings, and then the blowing of the shofar. It thus also serves as a gathering point for the whole community and an opportunity to pass their beliefs and traditions on to the next generation. And if elaborate hairstyles and colourful, traditional costumes are discreetly flaunted and bits of gossip exchanged, well, that's the way of Jews congregating everywhere.

In July 2008, the Israeli Knesset made the Sigd a state holiday. So, should we not now incorporate the Sigd into our Jewish calendar here in Canada? Cheshvan is the only month without a Jewish religious festival. As such, it is often referred to as mar-Cheshvan, or "bitter Cheshvan," because of the lack of festive opportunities to celebrate our faith. It might be said that the Sigd is the Beta Israel community's precious gift to the Jewish world, completing as it does the calendar year with a holy day that is unique to the Beta Israel but is now available for adoption by all Jews.

On the evening of Nov. 20 at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, I'll be incorporating a discussion about the Sigd holiday into a book talk about *Cry of the Giraffe: Based on a True Story.* In my novel, the heroine, a young Jewish teenager named Wuditu (not her real name) wakes up on Easter morning with the thought that, having been trapped in slavery and kept away from her community, she has no idea when she should be marking the Sigd.

Despite her desperately ill and malnourished condition, she decides: "It would be better to mark the day late rather than not at all. So as I worked, I fasted that whole day and prayed that I would find a way to go home to my family and to my people. That evening, I collapsed, unconscious – right in the middle of my mistress' coffee cups! Fortunately, I didn't break any of her dishes or my debt would have been even greater and my enslavement even longer."

Fortunately, Wuditu now celebrates the Sigd in Jerusalem. In February 1992, I went from Israel to Ethiopia to look for her and to pay for her freedom. A few days later, we climbed the highest mountain near the formerly Jewish village of Ambover. Nearby, we saw the school where, decades ago, Osnako taught Hebrew to Wuditu's brother, David. Next to it still stands the synagogue with its metal Star of David, fashioned by a Jewish craftsman. From that village, hundreds of Jews set out for Sudan.

This year, the Sigd will be commemorated in Canada as well as in Jerusalem. ■

Judie Oron is a Canadian Israeli journalist, lecturer and author and the former director of the Jerusalem Post Funds.

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Meanwhile, back in Tehran...

Paul Michaels

In early November (when this piece was being written), attention has reverted to Iran as the Nov. 24 (extended) deadline for the P5+1/Iran nuclear talks approaches.

Until now, and for the past several months, all eyes have been fixed on the horrors of ISIS and its seemingly unstoppable advances through much of Syria and Iraq while it tries to consolidate its Islamic "caliphate" against the U.S.-led efforts to stop it.

Only sporadic interest has been paid to the arguably greater threat to international peace and security posed by Iran's march toward nuclear capability, which has been slowed – not stopped – by these year-long negotiations.

Unless something changes drastically before this column appears, the six major powers (five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) and Iran will remain far apart on a deal that would deprive Iran of the capacity to acquire a nuclear bomb – a development that would engender radically destabilizing nuclear proliferation throughout the region.

As things stand now, despite somewhat optimistic U.S. reports that Iran is willing to compromise, prospects for genuine progress appear bleak.

In fact, the *New York Times* reported on Oct. 31 that Yukiya Amano, head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said that Iran was stonewalling on President Hassan Rouhani's commitment to answer questions about the "possible military dimensions" of its nuclear program – generally referred to as "weaponization" – efforts, past and current, to create components for a nuclear bomb. This stonewalling is consistent with Iran's refusal to allow IAEA inspectors access to its covert Parchin military site where weaponization efforts have been suspected for many years. (It's also the site where a mysterious, major explosion occurred early last month.)

Amano's comments came the same day that U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry remarked "We're closer [to a deal] than we were a week ago or 10 weeks ago. But we're still with big gaps."

On Nov. 2, citing an anonymous senior Israeli official, the *Times of Israel*'s Avi Issacharoff wrote: "A deal between the U.S. and Iran, or an extension of talks [beyond Nov. 24] on that contentious issue of Iran's nuclear capabilities, are both terrible options that would further destabilize the Middle East and allow the Islamic Republic to develop atomic weapons with relative ease."

Contrary to UN Security Council resolutions ordering Iran to cease nuclear fuel enrichment, the U.S.-brokered deal would permit Iran to enrich fuel at a low level. Israel considers any such outcome to be disastrous. According to the official in Issacharoff's report, "The number of centrifuges the U.S. agreed to [allow Iran] is rising. Already, there are talks about 5,000 centrifuges, while it is clear that the Iranians do not need that many for civilian purposes."

Israel also fears that the Americans may settle for a bad agreement as it seeks, behind the scenes, to gain Iran's co-operation in fighting ISIS. Israel is dismayed at this prospect, given that the U.S. State Department still lists Iran as the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and that, with the help of its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah, Iran continues to play a major role in supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad's brutal assault on his own people.

In the meantime, the Nov. 1 issue of the influential *Economist* magazine is devoted to Iran, with a cover story titled "The revolution is over." The argument – in its lead editorial and 14-page special report – is that the religious zealotry, which has characterized Iran since Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic revolution, is now yielding to a moderate, pragmatic wave (if not a counter-revolution).

As to what this means for a nuclear deal, the *Economist* is sanguine: "For a start, that on balance, Iran will act pragmatically, in what it sees as its own interests, rather than out of a messianic desire to pull down the world order."

Whether this also includes Iran's renouncing its desire to "wipe Israel off the map," potentially by a nuclear bomb, the august publication doesn't say. ■

Pearson would have loathed ISIS, too

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Rear-view mirrors often have a warning to the driver not to trust the accuracy of the image they see. That same warning could apply to some pundits who reverently posit theories about the past without actually looking at the whole truth about the way things once were.

In particular, I refer to the scorn certain writers heap upon Canada's foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East, which they consider a betrayal of our historic role there. One recent such expression appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on Oct. 26 written by Mark MacKinnon, a veteran foreign news specialist. MacKinnon regretted the government's decision to join the allied military front against the Islamic State.

"Let's pause a minute to mourn the passing of the Canada that we used to know, the country that saw itself as a 'middle power,' a force for peace and internationalism... Our decision to join the fight against an opponent [Islamic State] that – until this week – had never attacked us has been noted."

But his main regret seemed to be over Canada's policy regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute.

"We were still the nation that had invented international peacekeeping [in the Sinai Peninsula] and perceived, most of the time, as something like a balanced mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

"Our changing posture in the Middle East – from balance-seeker to belligerent – has been evident since 2006. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's then newly elected Conservative government rushed to be the first in the world ... to announce a boycott of the new Hamas parliament that Palestinians had elected... On my next visit to the Gaza Strip, the Hamas leaders I interviewed were perplexed... Why was Canada leading the boycott? *What had Hamas done to Canada?*" (my emphasis).

MacKinnon then ruefully eulogized Canada: "Consider this is a lament for the idea of a nation. A mourning for the Canada of old, the mention of which used to draw smiles in... the Gaza Strip."

Oh how he wishes he could once again see those missing smiles on Hamas leaders' faces! But he displays no equivalent remorse, let alone misgivings, over the fact those same Hamas leaders shamelessly, even boastfully, announce their primary aim to annihilate the Jewish State of Israel. To be sure they were elected. But they have no loyalty to democracy. Their chief loyalty is to the appropriation of their religion for the sacred mission of genocide.

And what might the Canadian diplomat who made our country "the nation that invented international peacekeeping" think about Canada's condemnation of Hamas and its terrorism?

Historian John English, who wrote the entry on former prime minister Lester Pearson in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, gives us a clue: "[Pearson] was pragmatic but deeply principled and his principles were based upon a liberal conviction that brutal dictatorships not only repress many of their own citizens, but also threaten the security of democratic nations."

Pearson abhorred Neville Chamberlain's appeasement in Munich and conveyed his views to the Foreign Affairs Ministry: "I think of Hitler screeching into the microphone, Jewish women and children in ditches on the Polish border... and whatever the British side may represent, the other does indeed stand for savagery and barbarism."

Other Canadians, too, rely on the views of the inventor of peacekeeping to justify acting against genocidal regimes such as ISIS and Hamas.

In a recent article in the *Huffington Post*, Sheila Copps, Stockwell Day and Lorne Nystrom quoted Pearson from a lecture in 1955: "The fact is, that to every challenge given by the threat of death and destruction, there has always been the response from free men: it shall not be. By these responses, man has not only saved himself, but has ensured his future."

Pearson believed there was no contradiction in a Canada that stands clearly against the savagery and barbarism of brutal regimes as well as one that is a force for peace and internationalism. Indeed, he likely believed that without being the former, Canada could never be the latter. ■

We need not price Jews out of Judaism

Rabbi Jay Kelman

There has been much written – including a cover story in this newspaper two weeks ago – regarding the placing of hidden cameras in the Washington mikvah, and I have little to add to this tragic story. However there is one aspect of the fallout that I would like to address.

In light of this scandal there has been much discussion on how conversions can be made more user friendly. It is specifically this group that is most vulnerable to abuse and even in the best of cases the process of conversion is not an easy one. It is for this reason that the Torah placed so much emphasis on treating the convert with the utmost of sensitivity.

Being "nice" to the *ger* – meaning both a stranger and a convert – is mentioned no fewer than 36 times in the Torah. While traditionally those who sought to convert were initially given a hard time, such was done to ensure their seriousness and commitment to Judaism. But once assured (as best is humanly possible) of their sincerity they are to be wholeheartedly embraced.

Rejecting a convert is to be done for religious reasons only. The idea of accepting or rejecting converts based on their financial status would seem to be sacrilegious. But with the cost of Jewish life such as it is, financial considerations enter the confusing calculus of the conversion process.

Rabbi Zvi Romm, administrator of the Rabbinical Council of America's New York beit din, noted, "One of the considerations we make [regarding potential converts] is, can the person hack it financially? If a person says I have no money whatsoever, I can't afford the $400 fee paid out over time, the question you have to ask is, how are you going to make it as an Orthodox Jew?"

What is most tragic about this comment is its truth. Living a committed Jewish life – be it Orthodox or not – is exceedingly expensive with its kosher food, synagogue membership, ritual items, housing in a Jewish neighbourhood and the exorbitant costs of a day school education. For good reason all Orthodox and many non-Orthodox rabbis will insist that a potential convert agree to send their children to a Jewish day school, the single greatest predictor of future Jewish engagement.

Yet perhaps it is most irresponsible to convert someone who will be unable to afford such, leading to much familial strain. What happens when the non-Jewish spouse and children of an intermarried couple convert and cannot afford the $250,000 per child that a day school education costs? Must we tell such a couple to forgo conversion unless and until Jewish education becomes most affordable for the middle and lower middle class? If so it might be a long wait.

Morris Zbar, the new president and CEO of UJA Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, was quoted in this paper in August as saying that federation "will never be able to provide the kind of funding that allows for open access. But we have to try to find a creative solution to keep costs capped."

It is painful for me to write these words. How dare I suggest that perhaps we have no right to convert the non-Jewish spouse of an intermarried couple! But we surely have no right to welcome anyone into the Jewish community without being brutally honest about the high costs that their new life will bring. How sad that in an era of unprecedented wealth and unprecedented assimilation we as a community have priced so many Jews out of Judaism.

Yet it need not be this way. We must mobilize as a community to ensure that all who want to partake of Jewish life be enabled to do so fully regardless of their financial means. This is a task that will take hard work and many people working together. But it is a task where we can and must succeed. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Knowing a thing or two

Norma Baumel Joseph

I know something. But how much do I know and what can I claim as a result? What does knowing something mean?

The famous quote, "Well I know a thing or two about a thing or two," attributed to Robert DeNiro's character Dwight Hansen in the movie *This Boy's Life*, seems appropriate for my state of knowledge.

What does it mean to know a thing or two? In some sense, we can infer that the subject is very knowledgeable about many topics – almost a renaissance person!

Yet the plain meaning is much more circumscribed. The speaker can only claim to know one or two things about one or two things. This then represents quite a limited education. And perhaps that is the best we can say about the state of our wisdom.

Given this attitude – which I think is a healthy one – it behooves us to be humble about what we proclaim. I am especially concerned with how we read the newspaper or receive the news in general. If we begin with the notion that having read one column, or – heaven forbid – watched *CNN*, we now know the situation and can report on it to all, then we are exhibiting an unfounded arrogance. The honest reporter can only claim to know a thing or two about said topic. How can we claim more?

In the Jewish world, we might be more sensitive to this perspective from observing the news about Israel. Reports are full of half-truths and misdirected information. The Israel I know is a place of innovation, excitement, culture and wonderful people. It is also a place of great complexities and contradictions. Yes there are tensions, but to know a thing or two about Israel should include knowledge of its vibrancy and intricacy.

To understand our religion, like any religion, requires great depth of knowledge and awareness of long histories and variable interpretations. It requires patience, study and exposure. One cannot know Judaism just by reading one book or taking one course. One cannot know Judaism by stopping classes at age 12 or 13. One cannot know it intellectually without experiencing the ritual and ceremonial aspects. This means that true to my opening quote, mostly we can only lay claim to a very partial knowledge.

Nonetheless, I must mention my uneasiness about the applicability of that quote in my own life. Since I am a teacher do I not proclaim, by definition, that I know a lot more than a thing or two? How can I teach without declaring that I am indeed truly knowledgeable? In fact, by taking on the title professor, by being inducted into the realms of scholarship, by the very fact that I am paid to impart knowledge, I am ipso facto attesting to my greater erudition.

I am caught in between both these approaches.

I prefer the humility approach to knowledge. Humility, true modesty, is the best way. But I must acknowledge that I know more than a thing or two about my specific areas of specialization. I want to be respectful and even modest about my learning. I also want to teach.

My path then seems to be to admit that while I teach I don't know all there is to know. My knowledge is limited by my own experience and history and by the fact that we keep discovering more. That old world attitude of final truths cannot be applied today. All our theories and preconceived ideas are waiting new data and transformation. There is so much more to discover.

And that is the wonderful truth about knowledge. There is always more to learn. Clearly, I can teach because I do know a thing or two or more about a thing or two or more. But I want to know even more so I keep on studying and being circumspect about all that I do know. ■

News

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Israeli schools promote Jewish-Arab co-existence

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

In an effort to raise money for their network of bilingual, Jewish and Arab co-educational schools, representatives from Israel's Hand in Hand: the Centre for Jewish-Arab Education toured several North American cities recently to meet potential donors.

Rebecca Bardach, Hand in Hand's director of resource development and strategy, and Mohamad Marzouk, director of its community department, ended their tour last month in Toronto, where they met privately with individuals and community groups interested in supporting their cause.

"We receive core government funding," said Bardach, "but to make our model possible we also rely on parent fees and philanthropy."

Hand in Hand, which was founded in 1997, has five schools, located in communities in Jerusalem, the Galilee, Wadi Ara, Jaffa and Haifa.

The organization's flagship school, the Max Rayne Hand in Hand Jerusalem School, opened in 1998, and since 2008 has operated out of a campus in southern Jerusalem between the Arab community of Beit Safafa and the Jewish neighbourhood of Pat.

This school is largely supported by the Jerusalem Foundation, which promotes co-existence and equity for all residents of Jerusalem, and has fundraising operations in several countries, including Canada.

The Jerusalem school currently has about 620 students, with an approximate 60-40 split of Arab to Jewish students.

"Our goal for every classroom, school and community activity we run is a 50-50 ratio [of Jewish to Arab students]," Bardach said, noting that Hand in Hand's two brand new preschools, in Haifa and Jaffa, both have a 50-50 breakdown in terms of their student populations and student waiting lists.

Students at Hand in Hand's Jerusalem school participate in a project about identity.

They also strive for a 50-50 split among staff, and in the younger grades, classes are often co-taught by Arab and Jewish teachers. Hand in Hand is looking to expand, and has launched a 10-year plan to open 10 to 15 more schools throughout Israel.

In addition to establishing schools where language, cultural and political barriers are broken down and Jewish and Arab students learn together, create friendships and, as Bardach put it, "learn to communicate with one another," Hand in Hand wants to apply its model on a broader scale. It's already made headway: each school functions as a launch pad for building infrastructure that bridges local Jewish and Arab communities.

For example, two years into a three-year grant from the U.S. government aid agency USAID, Hand in Hand has successfully organized language courses for Jewish and Arab adults to learn each other's languages, as well as mixed dialogue groups to discuss social and political issues and a number of social activities, such as a Jewish-Arab basketball team and a women's running group for Jewish and Arab adults.

"We want to break the segregation that happens, where each community lives in a segregated village or town," Marzouk explained. "We hope that in creating these kinds of meetings with adults, we can create opportunities and frameworks to break down segregation even further."

Bardach said the fruits of these efforts were demonstrated this past summer, as the war between Israel and Hamas precipitated anger and hatred on both sides.

During the conflict, the Jerusalem school organized weekly walks through the city, typically attended by 100 to 300 Jews and Arabs, who marched without posters or slogans, but simply with "the existential message that we want to be together," she said.

"This comes from [Jews and Arab people] knowing each other, trusting each other... When it came to a time of war, we didn't have to suddenly create these relationships, they were already there."

Of course, the co-existence model isn't without challenges, and neither are the schools immune to political tensions in the larger society. During the summer, the Jerusalem school was spray-painted with graffiti reading "Death to Arabs."

The matter was immediately addressed in classes, and students responded by making a poster that said Jews and Arabs can be partners. "When relationships between the two communities are, at a national level, particularly tense, this tension comes to the school. So then we as a school have to support the children and parents in the hostile environment," Bardach said.

Marzouk said the school's educators have developed strategies to deal with conflict, and that many are about engaging in dialogue and being as open as possible.

The schools are publicly funded, but small parent fees, as well as donations, are needed to subsidize features such as special training for staff and to support Hand in Hand's community outreach programs.

This fall, enrolment at all five schools was up by 10 per cent, and Bardach said their success is evident when one looks at the students' social cohesion.

"These kids are growing up together. You see friendships across [Jewish-Arab] lines. If kids are arguing about something, it's not about [political issues], but about any number of things kids argue about. They hang out, sleep over at each other's houses. They maintain these friendships as they leave the school, as do their parents." ■

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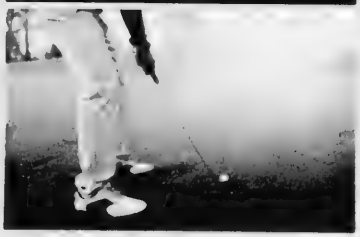
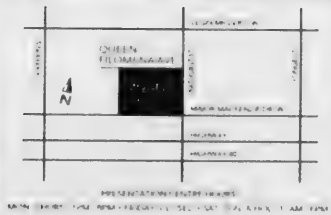

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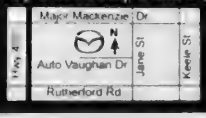


GUEST VOICE

Norma, I love you, but you're wrong

Women of the Wall's Kotel compromise isn't a sellout, founder tells *CJN* columnist

Anat Hoffman

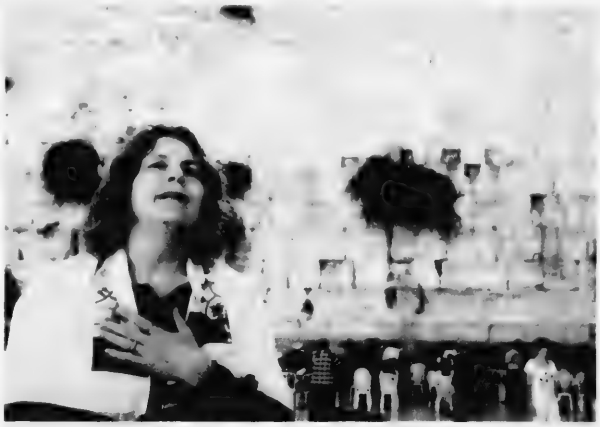
Norma Joseph and I are now at odds over Women of the Wall's (WOW) current dialogue with the government of Israel. We are sisters in a struggle of 26 years for women's equality and freedom of religious expression in Judaism's' holiest site. Norma was one of the founding members of our group in 1988 in Jerusalem, and we always remember that we began our long march following in the footsteps of her Canadian feet.

Now, in her *CJN* column of Oct. 15, "On Compromising," she accuses me of "selling out" and of negotiating away, mindlessly, the legal right of women to pray openly in the women's section of the Western Wall. She eloquently describes the parameters of a reasonable compromise, only to point out that the current board of WOW misguidedly gave away everything and received nothing in return. Unfortunately, she has her facts wrong.

Women of the Wall was not "vindicated," as she said, by the Supreme Court of Israel. The judges did not "pronounce in our favour." To the contrary, the verdict was an order to the state to provide us with an alternative site so that we can be moved from the women's section to another less controversial location. The government made an attempt to build us an alternate site and spent 4.8 million shekels ($1.4 million) on the project.

In her article, she emphasized that "we received another major decision in our favour from the district court in Jerusalem." She said the court said "everything we seek is legal and in adherence to the custom of the place – *minhag hamakom*." I really wish that all these legal victories she described were true.

Here is what the district court really said. Judge Moshe Sobel ruled that as long as the government has not given the rabbi in charge of the Wall the legal authority to declare what is local custom at there, he is not authorized to determine whether or not our prayer service is in accordance with the desired custom at the Wall. But this opened the door for the government to grant the rabbi that authority if two ministers simply sign a decree granting him to determine local custom. This signing can take five minutes.



Anat Hoffman at the Kotel FLASH90 PHOTO

> *We are gradually moving toward an agreed solution we can all live with.*

The two ministers needed for this are the minister of justice, Tzipi Livni, and the minister of religious affairs, Naftali Bennett. Bennett was more than eager to grant the rabbi full and total authority. The only thing that stood in his way was the strong and resolute stance of Livni. The minister of justice refused to co-sign. We applaud her strength every day. However, based on political realities, we cannot expect her to be there for us indefinitely.

We believe that we are leading a historic revolution in the Jewish world. Building on what you started, Norma, we are leading the way to tolerance and pluralism. We are no longer a tiny group. We are at the epicentre of a powerful coalition that demands and expects radical change.

Our coalition is unique and rare, representing millions of Jews. We are joined by the leaders of the North American and Israeli Reform and Conservative movements, the leader of the North American federations and Natan Sharansky, the one who originally envisioned the potential for a settlement. Across the table sits the prime minister of Israel and the cabinet secretary and an army of legal advisers. They represent the chief rabbis, the minister of religious affairs and the rabbi who runs the Western Wall Heritage Foundation.

We are gradually moving toward an agreed solution we can all live with. WOW will not leave the women's section until the last of our demands is implemented in full at the new site, which is on holy ground. All of our partners agreed to this important clause

We are not compromising and moving to "the back of the bus." We are constructing a whole new bus. Norma, we do this as we stand on your shoulders. I invite you to take part in this historic opportunity that you helped create with your passion and your dedication.

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren" (Genesis 13:8). ■

Anat Hoffman is the chair of Women of the Wall and executive director of the Israel Religious Action Center.

Closing program focuses on Kristallnacht's meaning

JODIE SHUPAC
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Kristallnacht, the Nazi-organized pogrom that occurred 76 years ago to the day before Holocaust Education Week's 2014 closing night event, has taken on a coherency that's not entirely consistent with actual events.

In her keynote speech at the closing ceremony, HEW's scholar-in-residence, Doris L. Bergen, addressed this dissonance between contemporary understandings of Kristallnacht and the more immediate recording of events throughout Nazi Germany and Austria that night, as seen in the diaries and memoirs of both Jewish and non-Jewish eyewitnesses.

The Nov. 9 event at Beth Tzedec Congregation was attended by several hundred people, and Bergen's talk was preceded by a procession of the General Wingate Branch 256 Royal Canadian Legion and the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Toronto Post, as well as a brief address by Beth Tzedec's Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl and a candle-lighting ceremony involving a number of Holocaust survivors and their families.

Of the co-ordinated 1938 attacks on German and Austrian Jews in their homes, schools, synagogues and businesses, in which at least 91 Jews were murdered and 30,000 arrested and sent to concentration camps, Bergen said: "Now, Kristallnacht has a name. It has stock images and photographs associated with it... [and] events around the world to commemorate it. We've shaped it. But in recollections of Kristallnacht from survivors, eyewitnesses, accounts produced at the time, you don't see this coherence. You see chaos, confusion and terrible crisis."

She explained that the name Kristallnacht, which means "night of broken glass," was actually coined by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels to emphasize the shattered glass broken in Jewish-owned shop windows. The purpose was to perpetuate the myth that all German Jews were wealthy business owners, Bergen said.

"The idea of synagogues [being smashed] would've been less popular [among many non-Jews]," she said.

Even the iconic photographs commonly associated with Kristallnacht, such as those of the grand synagogues in Hanover and Frankfurt burning, were mostly taken by Nazi photographers, Bergen said, and deliberately leave the perpetrators of the destruction out of the frame.

Other, more authentic records, she noted, depict a far more brutal and disorienting reality than those generated by the Nazi propaganda machine.

"The most vulnerable elements of the Jewish population were hit the hardest [during Kristallnacht]," she said. "Nazi thugs attacked Jewish orphanages... The elderly were singled out for particular kinds of torment... In Vienna, 200 Jewish women were arrested, stripped naked and forced to perform demeaning acts."

Holocaust Education Week's scholar-in-residence Doris L. Bergen gave the keynote speech at the event. MICHAEL RAJZMAN/NEUBERGER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE PHOTO

It's important to focus on the more immediate reactions of Jews (and non-Jews) to Kristallnacht because, through these accounts we can, Bergen said, "draw attention to the absolute uncertainty and panic that all Jews all over German territory felt at this time."

For many Jews, Kristallnacht triggered terrifying questions about whether they should flee their homes, as well as where they might be able to seek refuge and whether it was better for families to stay together or separate.

Many didn't anticipate that these events, which Bergen referred to as "a pre-genocidal hallmark of ethnic cleansing," would mark the beginning of a period of unimaginable horrors, or that the violence would have repercussions beyond Germany's borders.

"There was, at the time, a lack of understanding of what, in hindsight, seems obvious: that this violence wouldn't stop at the borders of Germany," Bergen said.

She continued: "Now, we think of Kristallnacht as the beginning of the war. But then, people didn't have this perspective... they looked to the past, to Jewish history, to understand. There are diaries and memoirs of Jews at that time who experienced Kristallnacht and compared it to pogroms in czarist Russia or to medieval violence against Jews."

She concluded by stressing that thinking about Kristallnacht both as it is understood now and as it was experienced more directly after the fact is important, because it's "a reminder of how much we still do not know about the Holocaust – even about some of it's most well-known incidents. It's a reminder to both continue learning from and learning about the Holocaust." ■

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New group to employ 'lawfare' in support of Israel

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

They don't have a name, or a staff, or an office, but they plan on taking on the "bad people" behind jihadi-supporting Canadian organizations.

Last week, David Nitkin announced there's a new sheriff in town, and it's gunning for the bad guys. But instead of bullets in its arsenal, its weapons will be lawyer's letters, legal suasion, notes to authorities informing them of potential legal violations and if necessary, launching cases on their own.

Nitkin, one of about half a dozen of the principals behind the collection of activists, said the unnamed group plans on using "lawfare" to make life miserable for those who would delegitimize Israel.

The new organization has set out more than a dozen areas of activity. Among them are addressing intolerance on campus, looking at commercial anti-boycott activities and litigation, cautioning banks against serving as conduits for terrorist funding, launching suits against foreign governments on behalf of victims of terrorism, exposing charities that are abusing their charitable status and helping people who've experienced discrimination in the workplace.

The new grouping has a core of 29 volunteer lawyers and legal researchers, who have agreed to provide public advocacy, legal opinions and take cases to court, if necessary, Nitkin stated.

"We propose to use the law to combat discrimination and anti-Semitism," he said.

Lawyer Donald Carr is one of the principals behind the grouping. He said the leaders of three existing organizations – Advocates for Civil Liberties, StopSponsoringHatred.com and Israelaa.ca (Israel Activist Alliance) – "want to take specific action in areas where it's sensible to do so."

The first such action could be taken within months, he added.

"We are going to set up an [Internet] site where members of the public can post questions or problems they have related to human rights, discrimination, academic freedom, abuse of existing laws relating to primarily the issue of terrorism and Islamism and jihadism," said Carr, who serves as chairman emeritus of *The CJN*'s board of directors.

Nitkin, who is the principal behind EthicScan, a research and resource centre that assists organizations to behave ethically, said the grouping is also relying on information provided by Tom Quiggin, a member of the Terrorism and Security Experts of Canada Network (TSEC). Quiggin addressed a public forum at the Beth Tikvah synagogue last month on the topic, "Extremist Islamist groups in Toronto."

David Nitkin
PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Quiggin has compiled a 202-page report titled, *The Muslim Brotherhood in North America (Canada/USA)*, in which he names local extremist organizations and their leaders, Nitkin said.

Quiggin has outlined local groups linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as others that are Khomeinist and Wahabist, Nitkin said.

"These are bad people, operating in Canada," he said.

The unnamed grouping has been in contact with the people behind the Lawfare Project in the United States and Shurat HaDin – Israel Law Center. The Lawfare Project opposes the use of the law as a weapon of war while Shurat HaDin uses the law on behalf of the victims of terrorism.

"We are assured of co-operation with both organizations," said Carr. "We are not tripping over each other. We will be in liaison with each other."

Carr distinguished the unnamed grouping from existing Canadian organizations, saying "our grouping is going to be taking overt action that none of the other organizations have taken."

Referring to the recent terrorist attacks in Canada, Nitkin said they were prompted by a specific ideology that is destructive to Canadian values.

"There is a political ideology behind these guys. That's what we're going after. It's a threat to the peace, order and good government in Canada," he said. ■

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Ottawa Limmud draws 250 for day of Jewish learning

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

This city's second Limmud festival, a full day of Jewish learning, culture and creativity, attracted an audience as diverse as the topics on the day's schedule.

More than 250 participants came to the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) for the Nov. 2 event, which was like no other in the community. For one thing, the entire program was organized and executed by volunteers.

Jenny Roberge, chair of the organizing committee of 10, said: "We are really out of the box. We have no hierarchy."

Planning began with a group of people on an education committee at Congregation Beth Shalom and evolved into what is now a program affiliated with Limmud International.

The umbrella organization, which started 30 years ago in the United Kingdom, organizes a week-long yearly event attracting 20,000 people from around the world. For the past few years, there have been smaller versions of the program in Canada.

"We put out a call for presenters," said Roberge. "You name a topic, we will research it and find a Jewish perspective. It is all across the board."

Israeli musicians Nori Jacoby, left, and Yonatan Niv, right, pose with organizer Jenny Roberge.
ROBIN CHERNICK PHOTO

University professors, doctors, lawyers, clergy, librarians, scientists, authors, artists and musicians and experts of all kinds volunteered their time to present such diverse topics as "What does Classical Jewish Text say about Climate Change?" and "Extraordinary Sexual Intimacy: Which Way to Transcendence?" A group of local Jewish artists exhibited their work as well.

"There is something for everyone," Roberge said. "Some people call this Jewish education without borders."

One thing was not permitted, however. "We will not be used as a forum to delegitimize Israel."

Though the event is run by volunteers, the community support has been very strong and includes the SJCC, the Ottawa Vaad Hakashrut, Hillel Ottawa, Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. The Vered Israel Cultural and Educational Program and the Israeli Embassy assisted and, with the help of a special grant from the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies at Carleton University, the innovative, Jerusalem-based musical group Tafillalt made its premiere appearance in Canada. The group gave a master class during the day and performed an evening concert at Carleton University as the festival's closing event.

"This was my first time at Limmud, and I found it a really interesting and thought-provoking day, thanks to the wide variety of topics covered," said Louise Rachlis, one of the exhibiting artists. "I also appreciated the opportunity to show my art. The day after the event, I was still sharing with others what I'd learned from the Limmud speakers. I'll definitely be back next year."

Planning is already underway for next year's program. Roberge is hoping to add even more variety and to reach out to people who aren't affiliated with a Jewish organization or synagogue, as well as to feature programming of specific interest to the local Russian-Jewish community. ■

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Hamilton art gallery returns Nazi-looted painting

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A family's decades-long search for a Nazi-looted painting has ended at the Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Portrait of a Lady, by Dutch 17th-century artist Johannes Verspronck, was stolen in 1940, along with other possessions of Alma Bertha Salomonsohn, who had left Germany for London in 1939 and put her belongings in a container to be shipped to her.

After it was stolen, Salomonsohn tried to lay claim to the portrait, but was unsuccessful. It was sold at auction in Hamburg in 1941, with the proceeds going to the tax office in Berlin-Brandenburg.

Salomonsohn's husband Arthur Salomonsohn, chair of the board of the Deutsche Bank, who died in 1930, had assembled an important art collection. Salomonsohn, who changed her name to Solmssen after immigrating to the United States in 1948, began a search for her husband's paintings. After she died in 1961, her family continued the search.

"The record went blank until 1987," said Benedict Leca, the AGH's director of curatorial affairs.

Portrait of a Lady has been part of the AGH's collection since 1987, when the gallery's volunteer committee purchased it for $58,000 at a Sotheby's sale of important Old Master paintings in New York, unaware it had been stolen during World War II.

The Solmssens retained a Berlin law firm that specializes in the restitution of Nazi-confiscated works. In 2003, the law firm notified the AGH that it believed *Portrait of a Lady* had been stolen. More than 10 years of negotiations and research followed to prove the painting's provenance until the gallery decided earlier this year that it belonged with the Solmssens.

When Leca joined the gallery in May 2012, this was the first file handed to him. He has spent hours researching the painting's story.

"I found it was on the sought works database [www.lootedart.com]. There is a bill of sale from 1909 from the gallery where the portrait was purchased. There are documents in Germany showing the Gestapo had taken Alma's possessions," Leca said. "The database of sought works is relatively new and was not around when the AGH purchased the painting. The Art Gallery of Hamilton bought it in good faith."

Portrait of a Lady by Johannes Verspronck

Leca said that in these situations, galleries have to allow for certain gaps in documentation due to the circumstances of the war.

"You have to take people at their word. But as stewards of the civic collection of Hamilton, we can't be just giving stuff back without checking. The overarching evidence shows the painting belonged to this family, and the Gestapo and the evildoers got it."

The gallery has agreed to return the portrait to Sarah Solmssen, Alma's great-granddaughter-in-law, who represents Alma's heirs.

"We are grateful to the Art Gallery of Hamilton for its decision. *Portrait of a Lady* hung in Omi's [Alma's] bedroom in Berlin and we are happy for its return. We are sad only that Omi [Alma] did not live to see her painting again," Solmssen said in a statement.

Last month, Sarah and her husband Peter Solmssen came to Hamilton to view the painting. They advised the gallery that it could remain there until April 26, 2015, when AGH's *Art for a Century: 100 for the 100th* centenary exhibition closes.

"It's a story of displacement and wrongdoing," Leca said. "But it's also the story of the dogged pursuit of one woman. She kept pushing and looking and then her descendants pushed and looked. This is a sad story but with a happy ending." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 13, 2014

Gala for Israeli hospital to honour outgoing CHW head

ILAN MESTER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After nearly six years at the helm of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW), national president Marla Dan is ready to pass the torch to a new leader.

The Jewish women's organization has put together a tribute gala in honour of her dedication to CHW, to be held Nov. 15 at the Sheraton Centre.

"It's a little overwhelming. I have to be honest with you," a humble Dan told *The CJN*, adding that she isn't one to put herself out there for accolades, but she's happy to do so for a good cause.

Funds raised by the gala will benefit the Assaf Harofeh Medical Centre in Israel, which is working on reducing the treatment time for stroke patients through a cutting-edge procedure called neurovascular surgery that can potentially shorten recovery times and vastly improve patients' lives.

"We embarked on a $1-million commitment, and Marla has been a major supporter of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO," says Alina Ianson, national executive director of CHW, adding that last year, Dan herself pledged $1 million over 10 years in support of the organization.

Marla Dan

Dan, who is married to Toronto businessman and philanthropist Aubrey Dan, is allocating half of that pledge to the Assaf Harofeh Medical Centre. CHW hopes to raise the remaining $500,000 through its upcoming initiatives, including the tribute gala.

According to Dr. Benjamin Davidson, who will be addressing the crowd of approximately 200 at the gala, the hospital's director general, CHW and the medical centre have been working together for more than 60 years.

"The school of physiotherapy was built in Israel in 1953 by the [CHW] organization," he says, adding that since then, the Canadian arm of Hadassah has contributed to many of the hospital's wings – including the breast health institute, a one-stop shop where women can find out about their health within 24 hours and start the necessary treatments and procedures.

Ianson describes Dan as a "change agent" who took on the role of president at a very difficult time for the organization. In 2009, CHW's then-president Terry Schwarzfeld died unexpectedly in Barbados, and Dan had very little time to adapt to her new role.

It was also a time when the government was introducing many changes to the not-for-profit sector, including the introduction of new legislation that meant CHW had to make substantial changes to the way it operated and modify its governance structure to comply with the new law.

"This is what the organization was focused on, and clearly Marla was the one who spearheaded those changes," Ianson said.

A strong supporter of Israel, Dan said she had great mentors in the organization and looks up to many of the presidents who came before her. However, she admits she never thought she would be the leader of CHW. The Edmonton native, who was a member of United Synagogue Youth (USY) as a teen, joined CHW nearly 30 years ago for one main reason: to meet and connect with other Jewish women.

Back then, she was a young adult who had just moved to Toronto and wanted to feel part of the local Jewish community. Her roommate invited her to check out a CHW meeting and Dan never looked back.

She thinks it's fitting that her chapter's name means "forever" in Hebrew, because she's made lifelong connections with her fellow peers.

"I just feel like our chapter will stay together forever," she says. "We were single, we watched each other get engaged, get married, have children, go to their bar and bat mitzvahs, and now our kids are heading into university. We grew up together."

Although Dan will no longer be president, she said she'll still be involved in her chapter and attend meetings regularly. "I like sitting and listening as the observer," she laughs. "I ask questions for clarification. But I'm glad to see that there's a future for the organization. The future is definitely bright." ■

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Alleged shul bomber asks Supreme Court to hear case

Simon Wiesenthal Center urges Canada to extradite him 'without further delay'

PAUL LUNGEN
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A Lebanese-born professor living in Ottawa is playing his last legal card in a bid to avoid extradition to France to face allegations that he bombed a Paris synagogue in 1980, killing four people and wounding 40.

Hassan Diab is asking the Supreme Court of Canada to consider his appeal of a decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal that would allow his extradition to France on the bombing charges.

Diab, a dual Lebanese and Canadian citizen, says his case raises a number of important issues of national importance. Turning him over to a jurisdiction that relies on intelligence evidence that cannot be adequately tested violates his Charter protections, he claims.

There is no automatic right to appeal to the Supreme Court. The court has the discretion to accept or reject applications requesting an appeal.

In its reply to Diab's court filings, federal authorities argue that the case "raises no issue of public importance."

Diab, 60, is accused by French officials of being part of a 1980 bombing plot by Palestinian terrorists in which a bomb was left in a motorcycle outside the Union Libérale Israélite de France on rue Copernic. The attack took place on the eve of Simchat Torah.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's European office, the rue Copernic bombing launched "two years of anti-Semitic terrorism – 79 shootings and bombings of Jewish targets across Western Europe, of which 29 [were] in France. This wave of atrocity ended with a machine-gun spree in the rue des Rosiers, Paris Jewish quarter, in August 1982, leaving nine dead."

In a letter to Justice Minister Peter Mackay, Shimon Samuels of the Wiesenthal Center's European office called on Canada to extradite Diab "without further delay."

"The trial of Hassan Diab will grant to many an end to their mourning. It will also set before a new generation the lessons of a dark period in order to confront a new wave of resurgent anti-Semitism and indiscriminate terrorist violence," he states.

French authorities say Diab is tied to the attack through fingerprint evidence, his passport, his membership in a Palestinian terrorist group, eyewitness evidence, as well as the analysis by a handwriting expert comparing Diab's writing to handwriting on a hotel registration card filled out by the bomber.

Diab denies the allegations. In a statement on the "Justice for Hassan Diab" website, he said, "I neither participated in nor had any knowledge of this heinous crime. I have always opposed anti-Semitism, discrimination and violence. I am innocent of the accusations against me."

Nevertheless, in 2011, an extradition judge upheld a French request for Diab's transfer to their jurisdiction. In May 2014 the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld that decision.

In responding to Diab's allegation that the intelligence evidence against him cannot properly be evaluated, the federal brief to the Supreme Court stated, "Surrender should only be refused owing to trial fairness concerns if it is demonstrated that the criminal laws or procedures in the requesting state shock the Canadian conscience."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), commended the federal government for responding to France's extradition request.

Hassan Diab YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

"Our hope and expectation is that the Supreme Court of Canada will not grant leave [to appeal], because there are no new issues of law for them to determine here," Fogel said.

"There is no question of Diab not getting a fair trial in France," he added. "I can't imagine a basis in which they'd grant an appeal."

Whether Diab is convicted is another matter. It will be up to a French court to weigh the evidence and determine whether under French law he should be convicted, he noted. ■

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Prof goes viral with 3D-printed kippah

JODIE SHUPAC
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Craig Kaplan, creator of the 3D-printed kippah that went (semi) viral last month, said he's tickled by the attention but the experience doesn't quite constitute his 15 minutes of fame.

The University of Waterloo computer science professor first made waves on the tech blogosphere two years ago, when he designed a 3D-printed espresso cup in the shape of a rocket ship and parlayed it into modest commercial gain.

"It's hilarious, I love when this happens," chuckled the affable Kaplan over the phone.

To make both the kippah and the cup, Kaplan used Shapeways, an online, 3D printing service that lets users design and submit a prototype for an object, then prints it for them using industrial 3D printers and advertises it on the website's digital marketplace.

The user decides the item's mark-up price and is paid that, minus a small fee, by Shapeways when a product they made is purchased.

The story of Kaplan's blue, Star of David-embroidered kippah, which he designed and wrote the code for while on sabbatical in London, England, last year, was "broken" by the niche publication *3D Printing Magazine* and quickly picked up by outlets such as *Tablet* magazine, *NPR* and the *Jerusalem Post*.

"I don't know why it's only gaining attention now, a year after I made it," Kaplan mused, "but I'm not complaining."

He admitted his inspiration was not based not so much on piety but practicality. His initial goal was to create a Panama hat, but he found it was too complicated for his first venture into 3D headgear.

"I decided to narrow it down to the simplest hat I could think of, and that was a kippah. It's a sphere, so it's easy to deal with geometrically."

The kippah comes in two, slightly alternate designs – labelled "Yarmulke One" and "Yarmulke Two" – and can be purchased off the Shapeways website for about $23.

It is made of laser-sintered nylon, a plastic-like material produced by placing granules of plastic under a laser and having them melted, layer by layer, into a desired three-dimensional shape.

Also, of course, it's kosher. ■

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Survivor bears testimony and flowers to site of Lodz Ghetto

LILA SARICK
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The armful of yellow roses that Freda (Franka) Kon laid at the memorial to the Lodz Ghetto carry a special significance to the 92-year-old Holocaust survivor.

A few years ago at a prom organized for survivors, Kon had selected a yellow rose for her corsage.

"I used to wear a yellow star, now I wear a yellow rose," she said at the time.

Kon brought a bouquet of yellow roses, made by her granddaughter, when she visited Lodz this summer, on the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto.

The journey, made with her daughter, son-in-law and a few friends, was emotionally difficult, but vital, she said.

"I was interviewed the whole four days [of the official program commemorating the ghetto]. If not us survivors, who will talk about what was happening?"

Kon, who was 16 when her family was imprisoned in the ghetto, spent the war in the ghetto and in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Stutthof.

After the war, she returned to Lodz, and the apartment where she was born. The family who had taken over the apartment wouldn't let her in and she recalls sleeping on the steps.

Times have changed in Poland since then, she said.

"This year was exceptional. You didn't feel any anti-Semitism. People on the street who recognized me from the television wanted to talk with me," Kon said. "Young people would join us as we were walking. For us, it was the opposite of anti-Semitism."

For both Kon, and her daughter, Lily Silver, one of the most memorable moments of the trip occurred during the screening of a film about one of Kon's closest friends, who also survived the war and was liberated with her.

The pair started chatting with a non-Jewish woman who had been a child during the war and lived across the street from the ghetto. The woman had brought her granddaughter to learn about the war.

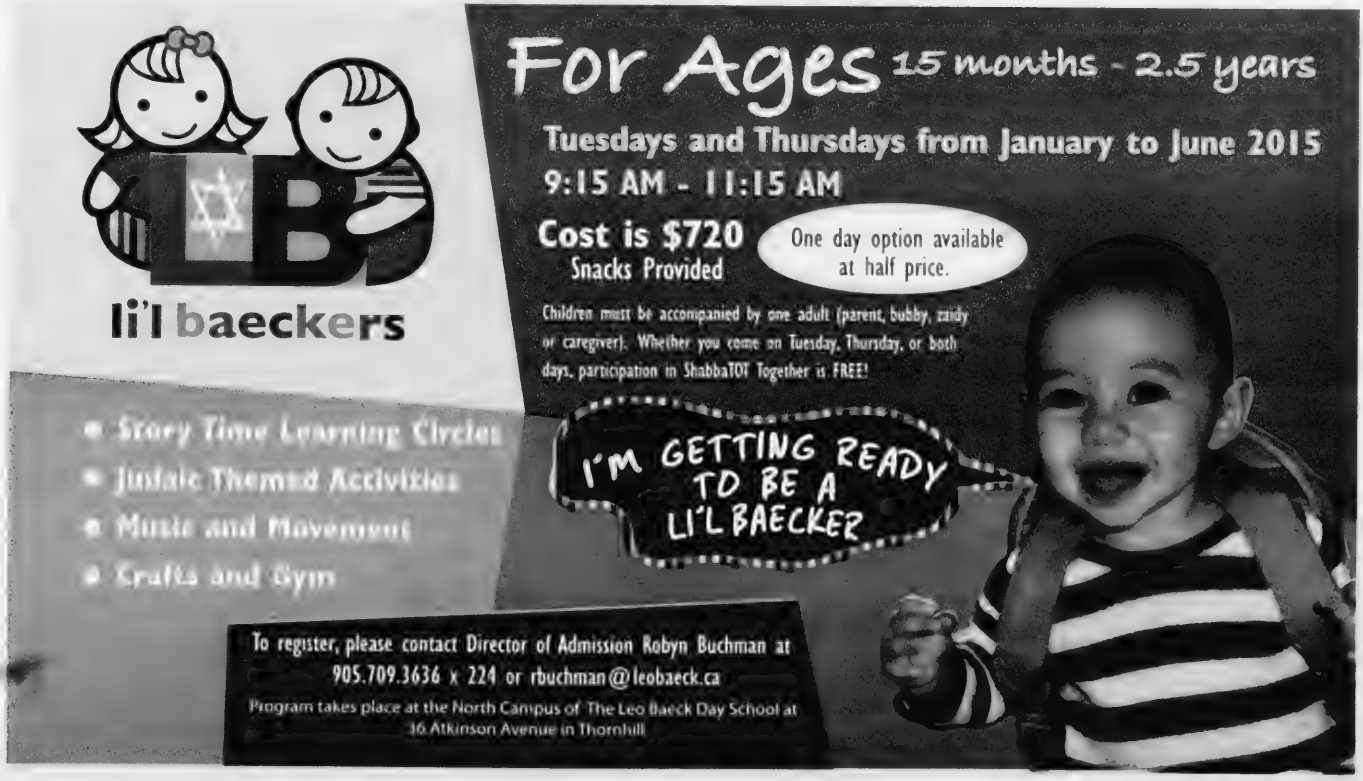
"To me that was so poignant. I thanked her for bringing her granddaughter," said Silver.

The four-day commemoration ceremony was organized by the Dialogue Centre, a group established by the Lodz city council to "promote the multicultural and multi-ethnic heritage of the city with particular emphasis on the Jewish culture." Kon toured Poland and Israel, where she moved after the war. She returned to Toronto from her trip to Israel just a few weeks ago.

In 2009, Kon attended the ceremonies organized to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto and she plans to return for the 75th anniversary.

"If I can go in five years, I'll go," she said. "We have to show them, especially the young people, about anti-Semitism."

Left: Lily Silver and her mother Freda Kon carry yellow roses to place on the monument to the Lodz Ghetto, on the 70th anniversary of its liquidation. Middle: The I.D. badge issued to guests at the commemoration. Right: Freda Kon, centre, stands with her son-in-law Syd Markowitz and her daughter Lily Silver, in front of the house where she lived before the war in Lodz, Poland.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Why Marital Conduct Rarely Affects Property Split

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Question: A couple has two kids, aged 18 and 14. The wife works two jobs and the husband has not been employed (homemaker) for more than 19 years After years of pleading with the husband to become employed, the wife has finally had enough and asks for a divorce. The husband has agreed to exchange a sum of money for the wife to retain child custody and the matrimonial home. However, the husband becomes violent one night and physically abuses the wife. Police are called and he is arrested. He has no employment and no money. How will the court look at this situation? The wife's fear is that legal aid may become involved and she may stand to lose half of the value of the wife's assets including the matrimonial home.

Answer: If the parents were not married then under amendments to Ontario's Children's Law Reform Act, a judge must consider violence and abuse when determining the best interests of the child and how that child should be parented, meaning issues of custody and access. This is true even if the violence was against the other parent, not against the child. If the parents were married, no such provisions exist under Canada's Divorce Act, although violent spouses traditionally do not fare as well in custody disputes. So she will likely obtain a sole custody order and his rights to access may be limited given his violent nature, even supervised, until he can show that he would not pose a risk to the children. Unless he can prove that he is truly "unemployable" he may have trouble having a Court make a spousal support Order if it finds that he is intentionally "underemployed" and the wife is solely responsible for paying for the needs of the children.

However, with respect to the split of the property, including the matrimonial home, your friend has every right to be worried. Unless he gambled away part of the family fortune or did something else to deplete it that was "unconscionable", he could walk away with half of the net worth that she accumulated during the marriage, including the entire value of matrimonial home (even its pre-marital value). There are exceptions to this rule: he has no right to funds that the lady may have inherited ***after*** the marriage or other property into which those funds were invested, other than the matrimonial home... But generally, the spouse who brings home the bacon (or smoked salmon) cannot usually plead that her spouse has been a bum and for that reason alone, he shouldn't get half of was accumulated over the course of the marriage. The reason? Well the law was originally designed to help stay-at-home moms who raised the kids for 30 years while hubby enhanced his career and worked while she cleaned the toilets. Such a woman may have scarified her own career prospects and ability to accumulate her own wealth. So when hubby then takes up with his dental assistant the law gives her half of the value of the increase of everything that her husband accumulated during the course of the marriage. However, because of our Charter of Rights, one cannot write laws that favour only one sex so it simply gives both sexes a 50:50 shot at marital wealth accumulation, with very few exceptions to the rule. So that bum may have to find a job to pay child support but there's a good chance he's walking away with a lot of money for doing very little.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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Righteous Gentile honoured for 'heroic act'

SHERI SHEFA
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He saved more than 5,000 Jews – about four times as many as Oskar Schindler – from almost certain death during the Holocaust, but it was not until four decades passed that his heroic story emerged.

The remarkable story of the late Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian trader who pretended to be a Spanish diplomat to save 5,200 Hungarian Jews from the Nazis, brought hundreds of members of Toronto's Jewish and Italian communities to Beth Torah Congregation on Nov. 3 for a Holocaust Education Week event in Perlasca's honour.

In addition to brief addresses by Italy's ambassador to Canada Gian Lorenso Cornado, Hungarian consul general in Toronto Stephania Szabo, and Beth Torah Rabbi Yossi Sapirman, and a keynote address by Perlasca's son, Franco, the program included a screening of a documentary that featured interviews with Perlasca prior to his death in 1992, as well as with two Hungarian Jewish Holocaust survivors who owe their lives to the Italian hero.

The film explains how Perlasca's role with the Italian military during World War II brought him to Budapest.

When Perlasca was imprisoned because he refused to join Italian leader Benito Mussolini's republic, he managed to escape and find refuge at the Spanish Embassy in Budapest.

He was granted Spanish citizenship because he held a letter of protection from General Francisco Franco, in recognition of Perlasca's service in the Spanish Civil War.

When Perlasca witnessed Hungarian Jews being rounded up into cattle cars to be transported to Auschwitz, he felt compelled to do anything in his power to save them from the death camp.

Using Spanish diplomatic letterhead, Perlasca forged documents that named him a Spanish ambassador and he began issuing "safe conduct" documents under Spanish law to provide safe houses for hundreds of Jews, protecting them from the Nazis.

Perhaps the most moving moment of the evening came when Mary Siklos, the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre operations manager, introduced Perlasca's son, Franco, to speak on behalf of his late father.

"As we saw in the film, Franco's father risked his own life to save the lives of hundreds and hundreds of innocent Jewish people in Hungary. One of those Jews was my mother," Siklos said, adding that the two Jewish women who were interviewed in the documentary about being saved by Perlasca were her mother and aunt.

Franco Perlasca

She said Perlasca, who has been named Righteous Among the Nations by Israel and has a 10,000-tree forest in the Galilee that was planted in his name, saved two more of her aunts, her grandmother, her great-grandmother, as well as other members of her family.

"I wouldn't be standing here if it was not for Giorgio's incredible, heroic act," she said.

Franco, who established the Giorgio Perlasca Foundation to honour and celebrate his father's legacy, shared, through a translator, his father's story.

He said one of his most vivid memories happened in the late 1980s, when one of the women he saved tracked him down in Italy to thank him for saving her life.

"When she wanted, at one point, to give my father three objects – the only three objects that had remained from their family during the war – my father didn't want to accept them. He said, 'keep them and give them to your children and grandchildren in memory of your family.' She said – and I'll never forget this – 'Mr. Perlasca, you must keep them, because without you, we wouldn't have any children or grandchildren.'"

"He did accept them. It was a teaspoon, a pendant and a coffee cup, and we still keep them with great love and care because we know the blood, the pain and the suffering that they represent."

In spite of his heroism and sacrifice, Franco said his father, and others like him, shouldn't be regarded as saints.

"They are normal people with their flaws, but they are people who, at the right time, feel their conscience intervening. They tell themselves that they cannot be indifferent, they cannot turn the other way and they have to do something. They have to act. They teach us that you can fight evil with good gestures and you can help people who are persecuted with a simple gesture, as long as you have the moral impetus to do it," he said. ■

Helen Edel lived among her enemies

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Living, literally, for three years among her enemies, Holocaust survivor Helen Edel, who died in August at age 88, sometimes wondered if she was the only Jew left in Europe.

It was an understandable concern: in October 1942, at age 16, Edel obtained false papers and fled from her Polish hometown of Rawa Ruska shortly after the Nazis invaded, when they relocated all Jews to a specific quarter and began routinely rounding them up.

Edel said goodbye to her family – never to see them again – and, taking on the persona of a Polish Catholic girl, Stefania Stefanowiz, was hired by the head of a Nazi employment bureau in Poland to work at his farm and inn in Seedorf, a small town in eastern Germany.

According to Edel's son Martin Regg Cohn, the Queen's Park columnist for the *Toronto Star*, although his mother's German hosts liked her very much, "treating her with respect, friendship and humanity," she lived in fear of being discovered, performing Catholic rituals and stoically enduring the family's denigration of Jews.

When she learned of her mother's death, Edel was unable to cry, Cohn said.

"She was afraid that if she started, she wouldn't be able to stop… I can only imagine, as her son, how painful that must've been."

Years after the war, Edel wrote several passages about her Holocaust experiences, seen only by her family.

One, titled "Hiding Among My Enemies," describes living among Nazis:

"What enabled me to play my role almost to perfection was my ability to separate my public and private personas. In public… my observant eye and curious mind focused on everything I saw and heard in a dispassionate and analytical way that astonishes me now," she wrote.

"In private, in the few minutes here and there… I gave myself over to the real me. While milking my sweet beloved Liesl, the goat, I sang to her in Russian, and spoke to her in Polish. I'm sure she was the world's only polyglot goat."

In 1945, when the Russians invaded, Edel's gift for languages helped her "survive the peril faced by a young woman surrounded by soldiers, who began sleeping all over the inn," Cohn said.

After several months, she managed to leave Germany, and hearing that there was nothing to return to in Poland, she slipped across the border to Prague. She spent a year there before moving to Paris, and, in 1948, after making contact with an uncle who had left for North America before the war, settled in Montreal.

Helen Edel, photographed as a young woman in Paris, in 1947. MARTIN REGG COHN PHOTO

Set on getting an education, Edel studied at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia) and eventually obtained a BA from McGill.

In 1952, she married Dorel Cohn (they later divorced) and had two children, Martin and Arthur, who lives in San Francisco.

In the 1960s, she got her master's in social work.

"She worked like a devil to get that, then went to work and started to excel as a psychiatric social worker at a Montreal hospital," Cohn said. "She worked with army veterans, which was a lovely way to come full circle, helping Canadian soldiers who had helped liberate Europe all those years earlier."

Edel briefly worked at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, and in 1979 she moved to Toronto and worked at Toronto General Hospital from 1980 until her retirement.

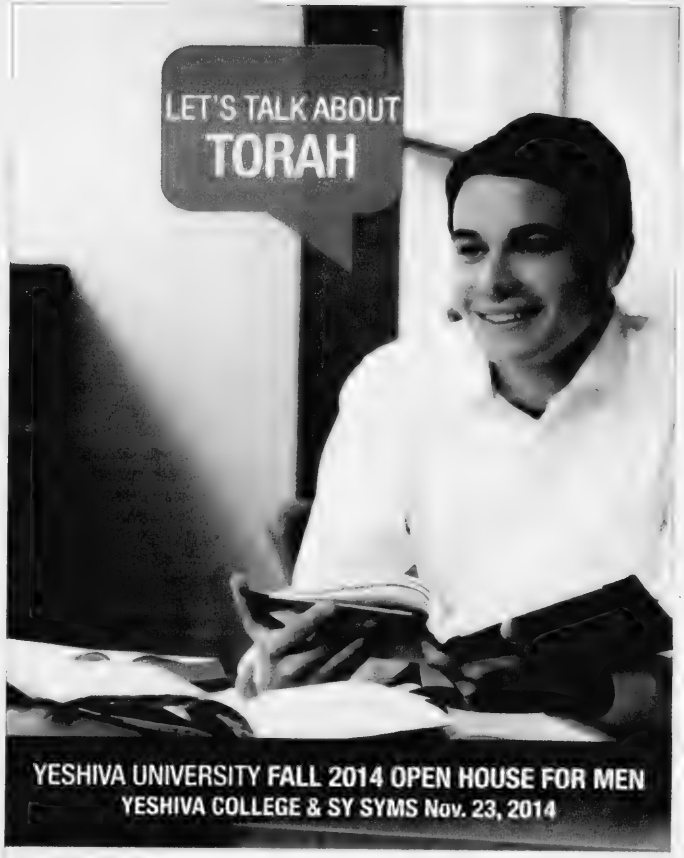
"A lot of psychiatrists would come back to her to get a second opinion on things," Cohn recalled. "Her judgment on cases was really trusted… she loved her work, loved being able to help people."

Though she saw her Holocaust experience as a defining part of her life, Cohn said his mother was "conscious of how the children of Holocaust survivors can carry a burden. She wanted us to have a really strong rooting [in the history], without being overwhelmed by it."

Edel is survived by five grandchildren: Emily, Rebecca, Megan, Yasmeen and Haleh, and is remembered for her remarkable resilience.

"She was a victim of historical events, but she refused to be victimized," Cohn said.

"Her parents had very much chosen life for her [when they sent her away]… She didn't disappoint them. They would've been very proud of her, and so was I." ■



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German judge collects Shoah survivors' testimony

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Thomas Walther

A retired German judge turned Nazi hunter was in Canada last week to gather evidence against a former Auschwitz guard about to go on trial.

Thomas Walther interviewed six Hungarian-born Auschwitz survivors in Toronto and was en route to Montreal, where he was slated to speak to at least two more.

The survivors came forward in response to a *CJN* article last summer on his efforts.

Walther, 71, found the Toronto testimonies credible enough to be submitted as evidence in the case against Oskar Gröning, who served as an SS guard at the death camp when thousands of Hungarian Jews arrived in the spring of 1944.

In Toronto, Walther also interviewed a woman who was eight years old at the time and who narrowly escaped the transport to the death camp, but whose parents did not.

In a *CJN* interview, Walther explained that under German criminal law, a close relative of a victim of violent crime who did not witness the crime, such as a sibling or child, can be a "co-plaintiff" in a case. Their testimony is comparable to a victim impact statement in Canadian courts.

The witnesses need not appear in a German court. Their testimonies will become part of the court record against Gröning, now 93, who in September was formally charged with 300,000 counts of aiding and abetting murder.

Known as "the Bookkeeper of Auschwitz," Gröning was in charge of collecting the valuables and other possessions of Hungarian Jews between May 15 and July 12, 1944. In that time, 437,000 Jews from Hungary and neighbouring territories arrived by train at Auschwitz, and 300,000 were sent to the gas chambers right away.

Walther said all the survivors he interviewed in Toronto recalled the same thing: upon arrival after a disorienting ride several days long, they were greeted with shouts of "*Raus, raus!*" (Out, out!) and "*schnell, schnell*" (fast, fast!).

"These are the words I hear from the survivors," Walther said. "They remember that." And the barking of guard dogs.

But none of the Auschwitz survivors would have seen Gröning, who was in charge of the so-called Kanada Kommando – prisoners who did the actual collecting of luggage, jewelry, watches and cash, which was then transported to warehouses called Kanada.

"He had no direct contact with arrivals," Walther explained. "He didn't touch one piece of luggage."

It was Gröning's job to tally and catalogue all the booty and turn it over to the Nazi regime.

Gröning has spoken openly about his time as a guard and said that while he witnessed horrific atrocities and has been haunted by them, he didn't commit any crimes himself.

Walther sees it another way.

Gröning "was one small cog in the killing machine. But all these small cogs had to work together in this factory of death."

Walther served as a judge for 31 years. Instead of retiring in 2006, he joined the Central Office for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, based in Ludwigsburg, Germany.

Testimony in the case against Gröning "helps visualize the meaning of the word Holocaust," he said. "You can show the fences, the barracks, the gas chambers. But you cannot show the pain inside of the families. You cannot show the tears of the survivors. You cannot show the guilty feeling that 'I am the last one of my family who lived.'"

Loved ones of victims, meanwhile, can impart to the court feelings of loss.

"They cannot prove that anyone killed their father, but they have the possibility to explain, 'what it means to me, that I had lost my father.'"

Walther has a personal connection to these cases. His father, Rudolf, hid two Jewish families during the Kristallnacht riots in 1938 and later helped them get out of Germany.

It was Walther who breathed new life into the case against John Demjanjuk, the notorious "Ivan the Terrible," who was sentenced to death by a court in Israel in 1988. The verdict was later overturned by Israel's Supreme Court.

But in 2011, thanks to Walther's efforts, a German court convicted Demjanjuk as an accessory to the murder of more than 28,000 Dutch Jews at Sobibor and sentenced him to five years in prison. He was released pending an appeal and died the following year at age 91.

Gröning's trial is set to begin in February. ■

UJA Federation encourages Women of Bay Street to give back

UJA's Women of Bay Street organized a photo shoot with 20 women, including those pictured here, who donate generously to UJA.
TONY HAUSER PHOTO

JODIE SHUPAC
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Financial success without philanthropy is empty. That was the key takeaway from the launch event of the Women of Bay Street, an initiative of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto held Nov. 6 at the downtown law firm Torys LLP.

About 180 women of varying ages – most hailing from the fields of law, business, finance and real estate – sipped cocktails and mingled before sitting down to the evening's featured panel discussion about the triumphs and difficulties of being a woman on Bay Street.

The event's key sponsor was PearTree Financial Services.

Designed to bring together busy, professional women and provide them with a platform for networking, as well as to engage them in federation's philanthropic activities, the Women of Bay Street concept was developed last summer, explained UJA's vice-president of donor development, Kim Smiley, in an introductory address.

To generate excitement for the project, last year the federation organized a "Vanity Fair-style photo shoot," featuring 20 women – most of the panelists included – who came from a range of professions. It was shot at the King Edward Hotel and was unveiled at the event.

"Every woman in this photo is an all-star on Bay Street," Smiley said. "But they're also donors. They pay it forward, giving back generously to the UJA."

She stressed that although North American Jewry is thriving and those in the room in particular have been extremely fortunate, the community is "not impervious to vulnerability," adding that "over 10 per cent of our community is living below the poverty line."

Ruth Ekstein, vice-chair of UJA Women's Philanthropy, explained that UJA provides diverse assistance to Jews, from the vulnerable in Toronto struggling with poverty, addiction or domestic abuse to Jews in Latin America and Israel and poverty-stricken Holocaust survivors in the former Soviet Union.

"To do this work, we have to raise dollars," she said. "Some see donating to the UJA as an obligation, a kind of 'Jewish tax,' but every time I donate, I feel really lucky. I sincerely hope you will join me to generously support the UJA."

The panel, moderated by Lisa Borsook, UJA Bay Street co-chair and an executive partner at the law firm WeirFoulds LLP, consisted of four highly successful women: Sherry Cooper, former chief economist at BMO, TMX industry professor at Mcmaster University's DeGroote School of Business and a writer and speaker; Cheryl Reicin, a partner at Torys; Deborah Starkman, chief financial officer at GMP; and Jenny Witterick, past president at Sky Investment Counsel and the author of two books, including a novel about the Holocaust.

Borsook asked all the panelists to discuss their respective career trajectories, their strengths and weaknesses, their ability to maintain work-life balance, the role of philanthropy in their lives and the challenges of working in male-dominated fields.

Each woman spoke candidly of her determination, made early in life, to be financially independent and to doggedly pursue her goals.

"I am fairly tone deaf when it comes to hearing the word 'no,'" joked Reicin.

Cooper, who said the media has often referred to her as "the outspoken Sherry Cooper," cited the difficulty of striking a balance between "being one's authentic self" and toeing the company line.

"I've had great difficult filtering my opinions," she said. "I was never one of the 'in crowd,' because I wasn't seen as controllable."

On the subject of work-life balance, which Borsook quipped is, for her, a myth, all the women spoke of the importance of being there for family.

Reicin noted that observing Shabbat has given her a weekly oasis.

"I couldn't have gone at my pace all these years without having that break every week," she said.

Borsook addressed the difficulty of working in a predominantly male environment and how she feels her thinking about it has evolved.

"I used to think it was important to fit in – to learn to golf, to be a good drinker. It probably did help me become successful, but now that I'm older, I have no interest in fitting in... We have a lot to improve on Bay Street with respect to accepting gender differences and capitalizing on what makes us different."

Regarding philanthropy, Starkman emphasized the sense of fulfilment she gets from charitable giving.

"If we don't support community, it ceases to exist."

Cooper referenced the remarkable success of the Jewish community, "in every field of endeavour," given its small numbers.

"If we as individuals aren't helping, who will?" she asked. "If we don't help those in need, we have no right to consider ourselves successful."

Women of Bay Street will hold events throughout the year, to help women network, learn and engage with the UJA. ■

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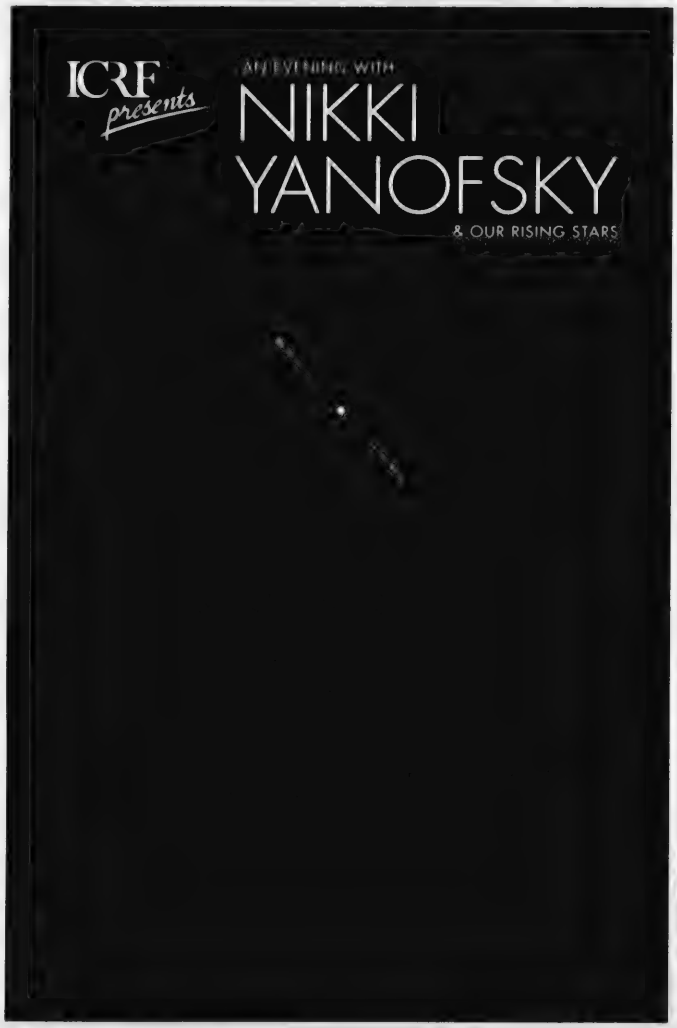

JSwipe dating app is like Tinder, but for Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
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JSwipe is "democratizing the shidduch."

These days, everyone and their bubbe is on Tinder.

If, however, you've been coupled since before the Internet and haven't kept up with newfangled mating rituals of kids these days, you may be unfamiliar with the prolific dating app and the fact a virtually identical Jewish version, JSwipe, started last spring. But for those angling for a shidduch, it's potentially big news.

Like Tinder, which launched in 2011, JSwipe is a free, mobile app that users download to their phones. By allowing the service to pull basic information from their Facebook profiles, such as photos, and track their GPS co-ordinates, users are matched with individuals who fit their selected age range, gender preference and radius.

When presented with a potential match, they can swipe left, signifying disinterest, or right, for the opposite. When two people swipe right for each other, they're both notified of the "match" and can start messaging.

Unlike longer-standing dating websites, Tinder and JSwipe do away with hefty questionnaires about people's interests, and place unabashed focus on physical attraction, highlighting photos above all else.

The key difference, of course, is that JSwipe is designed for those wanting to exclusively date within the faith. It includes setting options, like "Kosher" or "Not Kosher" and, under "Denomination," the choice between "Just Jewish," "Willing to Convert," "Other," "Conservative," "Reform" or "Orthodox."

According to JSwipe's Brooklyn, N.Y.-based founder, 28-year-old David Yarus, the app recently logged 100,000 users in more than 70 countries (he wouldn't provide Canada-specific numbers), and is mainly publicized through word of mouth.

He said users are "pretty evenly balanced" when it comes to denomination, with a skew toward Conservative.

"People have told us there's a quality pool of people in every category."

Yarus, who's worked in social media for Jewish organizations such as Birthright and Hasbara Fellowships, said the moment he used Tinder, he was "blown away by how futuristic it is" and immediately thought, "This needs to exist for Jews."

Asked about JDate, which was until recently considered the premier Jewish dating website, Yarus said all "older [dating] platforms" have likely been disrupted by the streamlined, millennial-friendly "swipe experience," and that asking users to pay, as JDate does, is outdated.

"It's a clunky user experience... the amount of time and money people put in doesn't equal the value they get out of it," he said. "I hear people talking about [JSwipe] at brunch, swiping with friends. It's the cultural standard for the next generation of Jews."

Still, it's unclear whether JSwipe has caught on in a big way north of the border.

Jessica (not her real name), 27, of Toronto, heard about JSwipe from an American friend and joined in July. She was unimpressed and hasn't used it much since. "It was pretty pathetic," she said. "Originally, there were only like two people on it [in Toronto], though maybe there's a better selection now."

Though committed to marrying a Jew, Jessica is also on Tinder, where she's had better luck. "There are still more Jews on Tinder than there are on JSwipe," she said, explaining she's able to filter out non-Jewish prospects by checking mutual Facebook friends.

Though she's gone on a number of Tinder dates and is casually seeing a Jewish guy she met through it, Jessica observed, "No one seems to be that serious on Tinder *or* JSwipe. People have too many options on these apps. They're flaky. They don't know what they want."

Marty (not his real name), 35, and also from Toronto, joined JSwipe a month ago. He has mixed feelings about it.

On one hand, he said, "It brings you a community of single Jews you wouldn't otherwise have a chance to talk to," yet, it's difficult to get a conversation going with people, even after they've matched. "It takes a few days for people to respond, or it doesn't go anywhere... I think because people are bombarded with options."

He's also on JDate, where he's had mixed results, and, like Jessica, he's screened for Jews on Tinder, but struggled to resist the "temptation" of non-Jewish women.

Tinder has garnered a reputation for being a "hookup app"– a platform for arranging casual sex, but Marty doubts JSwipe is being used this way. "If you're looking for someone Jewish, you're identifying that you're looking for something meaningful," he said.

Yarus said it's completely up to users to decide what kind of JSwipe experience they want to have. "We're democratizing the shidduch, to give *you* the power to sift through people in your community, your city, the world," he said. "You shouldn't have to rely on other people to know who's eligible." ■

Beth Emeth marks 60th anniversary

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Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue is launching a year of celebration next week to mark its 60th anniversary.

"There's a whole slew of things planned," said shul president Bernie Schwartz.

"We're going to have a young families Havdallah event in January, there is going to be programming for the kids... There is a weekend in April, which is going to be a multi-faceted learning weekend. We are going to have a number of speakers... there will be a concert in June... we are going to have a Yakir Hakahal award ceremony in October and that will be the grand finale to our year of celebration."

Launching the year of celebration is a Nov. 17 event with a 1950s theme. Guests will be treated to live music by a cover band called Of Gentlemen and Cowards, as well as a performance by Brandon Sobel and his comedy troupe.

Schwartz said that although Beth Emeth has a lot planned for its members this year, the celebration is about much more than programming.

"We try to do programming for our members, we try to give people lots of options, but at the end of the day, it's not just the programs that you put on for them, but rather the relationships that people develop in the shul. That's what keeps them there," he said.

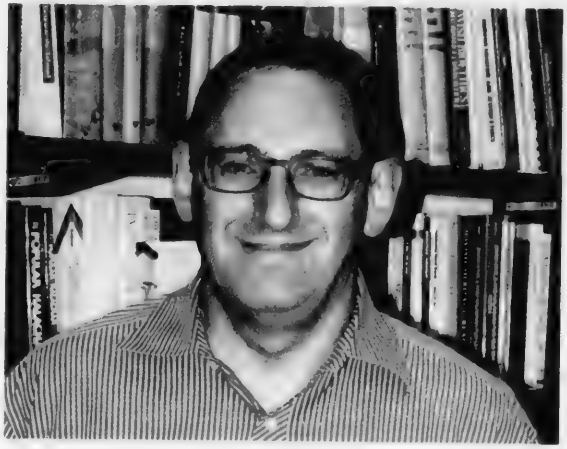
"There have been so many people who have ties to Beth Emeth. Either they were married at Beth Emeth, or they had their bar or bat mitzvah at Beth Emeth, or they grew up in the Bathurst Manor... and of course, people go their different ways, and young families these days are unaffiliated and so on, but to me, this is an opportunity for people to reconnect with their roots."

Schwartz told the story of a couple who were married at Beth Emeth 35 years ago, but had been members of another shul since they got married.

"They were invited to a wedding at Beth Emeth and were sitting in the sanctuary. They hadn't been to the shul in years, and a woman turned to her husband, who she had married there maybe 35 years ago... and she said, 'This is our home. This is our spiritual home,'" Schwartz said, adding that soon after that, they became members.

Schwartz, who has served as president for the past year, has been a member of Beth Emeth since he married his wife, Riva, in 1983.

"Riva's family are longtime members going back to the mid-1960s when they moved to the Bathurst Manor. My children – I have three boys... I'm proud to say they are fourth-generation members of Beth Emeth."



Rabbi Howard Morrison

> *There have been so many people who have ties to Beth Emeth. Either they were married at Beth Emeth, or they had their bar or bat mitzvah at Beth Emeth, or they grew up in Bathurst Manor*

The congregation's history dates back to 1955 when 150 people in Toronto's Bathurst Manor pooled what little money they had to operate out of a small home in the neighbourhood. The congregation bounced around a few other temporary locations until construction began on their current home in 1959.

"The shul was started 10 years after the end of the war in 1955. When people moved to Bathurst Manor, many of whom were survivors of the Shoah, they realized something was missing from their lives and the neighbourhood," Schwartz said.

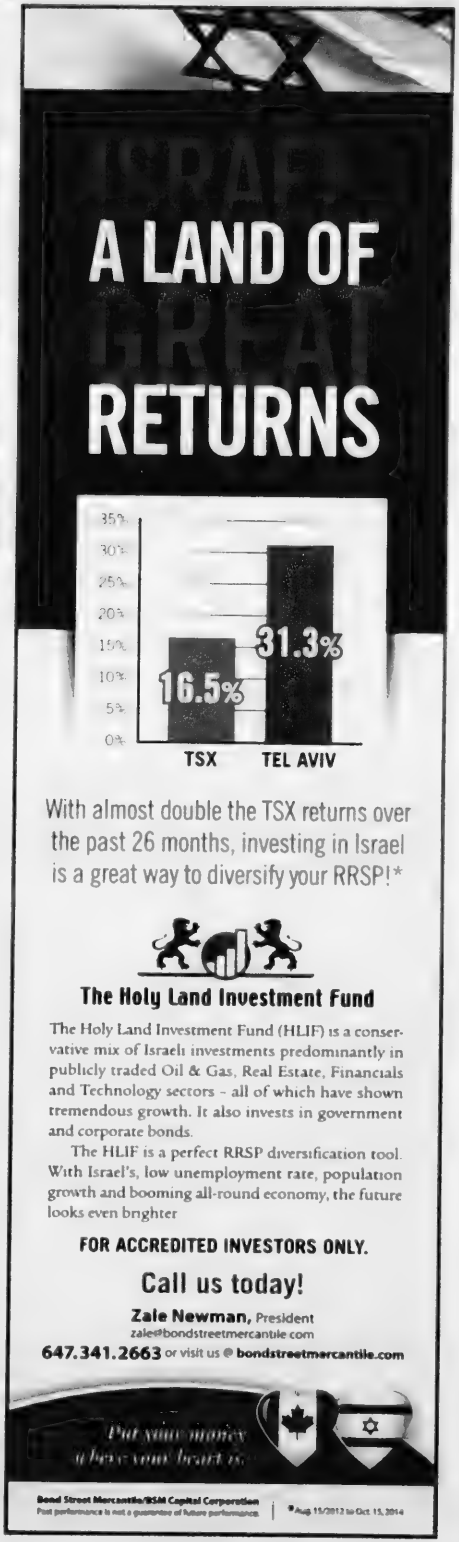
He said a small group of Jews founded the congregation, which boasts a membership of about 4,000 today, and it "grew from there."

Beth Emeth spiritual leader Rabbi Howard Morrison, who has been serving his congregation since 2000, said there is much to look forward to over the next 60 years.

"Our goal for the next 60 years is to continue serving our young, our old, knowing that they are part of a larger Jewish community, that they are a part of the commitment to the state of Israel, that they are part of a 4,000-year ongoing Jewish way of life," Rabbi Morrison said.

He referred to Beth Emeth's new logo in honour of the 60th anniversary, which incorporates the slogan "honouring our past, celebrating the present and building the future."

"Those three expressions are truly what we are commemorating this year. In a very integrated, interconnected, equal way, we truly are honouring those who came before us, celebrating the moment, but knowing that all of that is contingent on making sure the future piece happens are well." ■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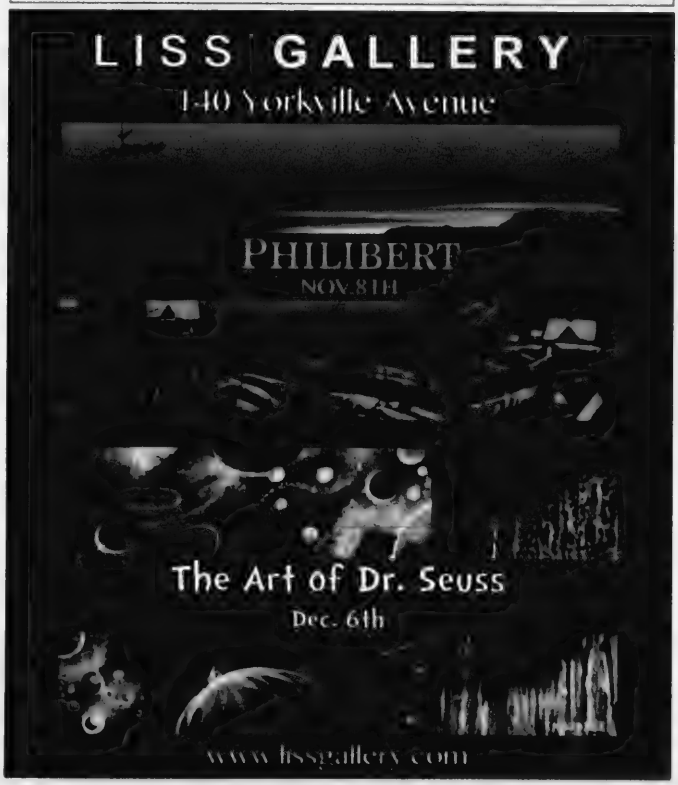

Activist seeks to boost lives of Ethiopian Israelis

SHERI SHEFA
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Lesley Simpson, left, and Yuvi Tashome

Yuvi Tashome was five years old when she braved a months-long journey from Ethiopia to seek refuge in Israel as part of Operation Moses in the 1980s.

Over the years, tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews found their way to Israel, looking to escape war and poverty, and to find a better life in the Holy Land.

Although there is no doubt life in Israel is a vast improvement from what they left behind, Israel's 125,000-strong Ethiopian community is still struggling to thrive in Israeli society.

Unemployment rates for Ethiopians aged 18 to 35 are about 20 per cent, and about 68 per cent of Ethiopian immigrants live below the poverty line.

It was 2005 when Tashome decided that if things were going to change for her community, she was going to have to take matters into her own hands.

She founded an NGO called Friends By Nature (FBN), which aims to support a network of Ethiopian Israeli communities who live in under-developed neighbourhoods.

"I couldn't bear the reality of youth delinquency, unemployment, and worst of all, the lack of role models who can bring change and hope," she told *The CJN* from Israel.

In addition to programming, Tashome, who is now in her late 30s, felt the organization would have much more of an impact if she lived in a community she was working to improve.

For that reason, Tashome, along with her husband, Nir Katz – who is also FBN's executive director – and their four children have chosen to reside in Gadera, an Israeli town with a struggling Ethiopian-Israeli community, in the hope that her family can set a positive example for her neighbours.

"Basically the idea was to take responsibility for what's happening with the Ethiopian community by being a role model," she said.

"By role-modelling, by being in this neighbourhood, living in this neighbourhood… it is opening their minds and their willingness to do for themselves… If you can take care of yourself, you don't need anybody else to help you," Tashome said.

"Israel is not a big state… what people think about us [Ethiopian-Israelis] is not good, and what is happening is that when one Ethiopian family does something bad, even in the north of Israel, it affects me… In order to improve my story, and my future and my kids' future, I need to solve the community situation."

She said her community faced an even bigger challenge this past summer during Israel's war with Gaza.

"This neighbourhood usually is neglected by the government and by the municipality, but during wartime, it's even worse, because you're not allowed to do anything," she said, explaining that municipal summer programs were cancelled for safety reasons and as a result, the crime rate in the towns FBN serves soared."

But Tashome was encouraged when 25 teenagers approached her staff to create programming for the younger members of their community.

"This summer, young kids, 15, 16 years old, they said, 'OK, there is nothing to do. There is war and no one is helping us to find a way to spend our time, so we are going to take action and do activities for our little brothers and sisters."

Now, FBN is seeking to raise $30,000 through the crowd-funding site Indiegogo to keep this youth-run program going.

In Toronto, journalist and author Lesley Simpson is doing her part to raise awareness and funds for FBN. Simpson said her relationship with Tashome and FBN dates back to 2009, when Tashome was in Toronto to speak at a New Israel Fund event.

When Simpson learned about Tashome's exodus from Ethiopia to Israel, she decided to write a children's book about her journey, *Yuvi's Candy Tree*, which won the Canadian Jewish Book Award for youth literature.

"I kept in touch with her, because I saw what she had done with her NGO… trying to empower the new generation of Ethiopian kids and I was quite taken with her and her husband, Nir… I thought they were a new generation of game-changers," Simpson said.

In an attempt to help raise funds for FBN, Simpson is offering her home for a Shabbat dinner later this month, during which she will share the story behind *Yuvi's Candy Tree*.

Tashome said she hopes this fundraising initiative will shed some light on the situation in Israeli towns like Gadera. "I think it's time to change that and it's not going to happen without us taking action." ■

See related story on page 8.

GUEST VOICE

McGill students abandon slacktivism to defeat anti-Israel motion

Jeff Bicher

The once-vibrant community of Jewish student activists has morphed over time into a community of slacktivists, where picket signs and regular meetings have been replaced with Facebook "likes" and WhatsApp groups.

It is now commonplace to hear people on campus say, "I have chosen to focus on global issues right now." This is the new reality, until something happens, that is. And something always happens. This time it was at McGill University, when on Oct. 22, a group of students put forward a one-sided, anti-Israel motion at the Students' Society for McGill University (SSMU) general assembly meeting, causing the handful of Jewish student activists to galvanize their peers.

At the beginning of October, the leaders of Israel on Campus – McGill (IOC-M) got wind that a known anti-Israel student group would be putting forward a lengthy motion condemning Israel for its actions last summer and standing in support of Gazans.

Jordan Devon, co-president of IOC-M, brought this issue to our campus relations team, comprising professionals from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and Hillel Montreal.

When a motion like this is presented on campus, it would not have a direct impact, positive or negative, on the university itself or change the way McGill works with its Israeli counterparts. Essentially, this kind of motion can only serve to affect the atmosphere for students and thereby provide justification for further anti-Israel rhetoric on campus.

If this motion was the beginning of the marginalization of a specific group of students on campus, it was clear to student activists that the argument against this motion would be about McGill campus culture and not about Israel. So at the very well attended general assembly – there were more than 800 students at one point for a meeting that usually draws 150 people – as the anti-Israel motion was about to be discussed, a new motion was brought forward to table the anti-Israel motion indefinitely. It was argued that the original motion was divisive and would cause students on either side of the debate to be upset. Supporters of the counter-motion further argued that there was no positive outcome to debating if Israel would be condemned. After almost two hours of debating the merits of debating the original motion, the presiding chair called for a vote, reminding all students in the room that unlike a general motion, this motion required those in attendance to vote – abstentions were not permitted. Ultimately, to the relief of many, the motion to table the original anti-Israel motion indefinitely was passed.

Close to 650 people left as soon as the motion was tabled.

For those diehards who stayed, the evening was not over. The student activists still at the meeting were able to send out word that a subsequent motion against military research funding was being amended to condemn supposed human rights violations made by countries who benefit from military research, including Israel, Canada and the United States. Even though many of the students were in the throes of mid-terms, 75 students ran back to the meeting and defeated the amendment. The students then stayed until the meeting was adjourned.

Aliza Saskin, co-president of IOC-M, in a statement made after the general assembly, said, "It is of paramount importance to recognize that this was not a victory for the students who opposed the proposed motion, but a victory for the entire student body."

Israel on Campus – McGill is a newly formed McGill student club whose purpose is to bolster the pro-Israel community on campus. Working with the Jewish Agency Israel Fellow for Hillel at Hillel Montreal, IOC-M focuses on Israel engagement beyond the conflict, including Israel education, Israel awareness and Israel advocacy.

In the end, the mood on campus, not just at McGill, is not what it used to be, yet our students will continue to be at the forefront of this debate. And through our significant partnership with CIJA Quebec, Hillel Montreal will continue to be there for students affected by these issues. We wish the campus community continued resilience and strength, so that campus life could continue to foster healthy societal trends. ■

Jeff Bicher the executive director and CEO of Hillel Montréal,

Michael Kastner has made a gift of One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00) to the Brian Mulroney Institute for Government of St. Francis Xavier University in support of his Law School classmate and friend, The Right Honorable Brian Mulroney, former Prime Minister of Canada.

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Winnipeg shul's downsizing plan gets downsized

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIE CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Herzlia Adas Yeshurun will renovate instead of tearing down and rebuilding. MYRON LOVE PHOTO

The Herzlia Adas Yeshurun Synagogue's on-again-off-again plan for a major rebuild of its 60-year-old building in south Winnipeg is off again.

Shortly after congregation president Earl Hershfield outlined the details of the plan for the shul's 100 member families around Rosh Hashanah, word came that the ambitious rebuild has been scaled back to a more modest renovation project.

"The cost of construction was much more than we anticipated," Hershfield said.

The new plan – which will begin with the installation of a $300,000 heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system – will cost about $1 million and come from members, of which $900,000 has been pledged so far, he said.

"That will be the first phase," he added. "In the second phase, we will redo our kitchen."

But he said further renovations and upgrades will depend on how much money the shul can raise.

Herzlia, the city's largest Orthodox congregation, announced a major rebuild almost three years ago. The impetus was the need to replace the building's outdated (and original) heating system after the city ordered the synagogue to shut down its boilers. The building has been functioning with only area heaters for warmth over the past two winters.

The plan initially was to tear down the building and put up a new synagogue that would be about half the size of the current structure.

A secondary reason for the project, Hershfield told *The CJN* earlier this year, was that the building was originally opened as the south end branch of Talmud Torah, with the synagogue component having been added in 1954. That was a couple of years after the school opened, when the congregation of the Adas Yeshurun Synagogue relocated from North Winnipeg. It's been many years since the building last housed a school, so the congregation no longer has any need for the unused classrooms.

The congregation originally announced a fundraising drive in the winter of 2012. The goal was to raise $1.5 to $2 million to tear down the current structure and replace it with a smaller building on one level. Little came of that effort.

The second chapter began in the summer of 2013, when the Herzlia board approached the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg with an offer to turn over ownership of its building and land to the federation. In return, the federation would help with the cost of replacing the old boilers and upgrading the building.

The payoff for the federation was the possibility of opening a second daycare in the building to house children for whom there was no space at the daycare at its central campus. That plan fell through when the federation saw the costs involved.

Earlier this year, Hershfield said synagogue members had pledged close to $900,000 to upgrade the shul. How large a structure Herzlia would build, he said, would depend on the federation and the additional daycare spaces.

"If we have to go on our own, we will build a smaller shul on one level," he said then. "There are also other potential sources of funding we can look into."

When the federation decided to put its new daycare somewhere else, the congregation was on its own.

The price tag for the new, 7,000-square-foot building would have been about $1.8 million and would have contained a sanctuary, library, offices and party room. ■

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NOVEMBER 13, 2014

Israel gains by integrating Arabs into workforce: panel

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Taking part in the discussion were, from left, Suanne Kelman, Safa Garb, Ifat Baron and Aiman Saif. RAFI YABLONSKY PHOTO

A panel of Israeli government and civil society leaders were in Toronto last week to convince the local Jewish community that a stronger Israeli Arab population means a stronger Israel.

"If you care about Israel, you should care about the Arab society. You should always put this issue on the agenda and don't leave it behind. This issue is the most strategic issue for the country for the next decades," said Aiman Saif, director general of the Authority for Economic Development of the Minorities Sector in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office.

Saif was joined by Ifat Baron, founder and CEO of IT Works, a non-profit that aims to bring qualified Arab-Israelis into Israel's booming high-tech industry, and Safa Garb, director of the Joint Distribution Committee's (JDC) Arab society and infrastructure initiative, which works to remove barriers to employment for Arabs in Israel.

The discussion, held at the Lipa Green Centre, was titled "Jews and Arabs in Israel: Investing in a Shared Future", and moderated by Suanne Kelman, a retired Ryerson University journalism professor and a member of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Israeli Arab issues committee. It highlighted how the plight of Israel's Arab citizens affects the entire country.

"Regarding employment, Israel has a relatively low [rate of] participation in the labour force compared to other OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries. On average it's about 74 per cent... compared to about 82 per cent on average in other OECD countries. The main reason is the low participation rate of the Arabs and the haredim, the ultra-Orthodox," Saif said.

"Regarding the Arabs, the major problem is with the Arab women," Saif said, adding that only 27 per cent of Arab women are part of the labour market, while only 70 per cent of Arab men are employed.

"We make up 20 per cent of the population, but our contribution to the GDP in Israel is only eight per cent. So the Israeli market is losing 30 billion shekels a year because the Israeli Arabs are not integrated into the Israeli economy," Saif said.

He said since 2008, the Israeli government has made the issue a top priority, having earmarked 5 billion shekels to be invested in the Arab community.

He said the government is working on improving transportation in Arab towns and has worked with organizations such as the JDC to establish 21 employment centres to help Arab women in particular enter the labour market.

Saif said there is also a program that offers micro loans to women who want to start businesses.

"We have given out 3,000 micro loans, and it is a great success," Saif said, adding that the government's investments are paying off.

"We see the positive change in the data – the rate of the Arab women in the labour market has increased. Today, we speak about only 27 per cent [of Arab women in Israel's labour force], but five years ago, it was only 23 per cent," he said.

The JDC's Safa Garb said that as a woman who comes from an Arab-Israeli town, she knows how easily she could have been part of the 73 per cent of Arab women who are unemployed.

"It was because of my stubborn streak... that I could move out into the world on my own terms," Garb said.

She said she feels lucky to be working for the JDC, where she is able to leverage her experience and background to make life better for members of her community.

She also talked about some of the JDC's initiatives, such as TEVET Employment Initiative, which was formed in 2005 in partnership with the Israeli government and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation to help the chronically unemployed lift themselves out of poverty by obtaining gainful work. Another program is Excel HT, which, in partnership with Ifat Baron's organization, IT Works, helps Arab citizens in Israel find quality hi-tech jobs.

She warned that the current situation, with a disproportionate number of Israeli Arabs and haredi Jews unemployed, is unsustainable. Based on current statistics, it's projected that by 2040, 78 per cent of school-aged children in Israel will be either haredi or Arab.

Baron said the reason Israeli Arabs, some of whom have master's degrees, face such a difficult time finding well-paying jobs is because it is about who you know, not what you know.

"The chances of getting hired if a friend helps you is four times greater as someone who applies through a website."

She cited discrimination as another concern, exacerbated by the fact there is little interaction between Arabs and Jews. She said Arab-Israelis are so poorly integrated into Israeli society that she was 22 years old before she met an Arab for the first time.

The lack of transportation from Arab towns is another challenge. "The start-up nation is in the centre of Israel and Arabs live far away in the periphery... The last reason is the cultural difference. People want to hire people that look like us and speak like us."

Saif said that if things don't change, thousands of Israeli Arabs who are obtaining master's degrees and PhDs will continue to take their talents elsewhere. "The challenge for the government, for the Israeli business sector, is very, very big and we have to attract and get back this enormous human capital that Israel needs," Saif said.

"We need to give these people the opportunity to work and be part of the labour market... Without partners, without philanthropists, without NGOs... we cannot make a change. We need to work together. All the partners have to make a change." ■

Please see related story on page 7.

Called to Serve exhibit honours military chaplains

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Rabbi Lazer Danzinger, in red, officiates at the 2011 wedding of Maj. Alain Cohen, left, while Cohen's father holds a Kiddush cup. At right, Eric Levine, left, and Allan Rubin, stand in front of Rabbi David Monson's World War II chaplain's uniform, to the left of the cross.

Amid the uniforms, medical kits, photo displays, badges and artifacts from the Canadian armed forces that highlight the *Called to Serve* chaplains exhibit at St. James Cathedral in downtown Toronto, you'll find a document that bridges military and civilian life.

It's a hand-written letter to a parent, and it's the kind of letter no one wants to receive. In it, a Canadian army chaplain offers condolences for the death of a beloved son, and explains that the soldier served honorably and died bravely, with his comrades doing for him all they could as his life came to an end.

It's a reminder of one of the unhappy, though necessary, duties that Canada's military chaplains can be called upon to perform. The letter is part of the exhibition that marks the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I. It's subtitled, *An Exhibit Honouring Canada's Military Chaplains of All Faiths.*

The exhibit chronicles and pays tribute to chaplains "who donned battle dress and joined members of the armed forces on the front lines of past wars" and who serve in peace time as well.

The exhibit, which runs until Nov. 16, includes artifacts provided by the Jewish Canadian Military Museum (JCMM), among them the uniform of Rabbi Captain David Monson, perhaps the best known of the military's 22 Jewish chaplains who served during World War II.

They were needed because Jewish men and women joined the forces in large numbers, and in greater proportion to their numbers compared to other minority groups, said Eric Levine, secretary-treasurer of the JCMM and a member of the exhibit's planning committee.

Altogether, 18,000 Jews served in all three services during the World War II, with 428 losing their lives.

Canadian Jews also served in substantial numbers in World War I, he continued. The museum knows of 4,700 who served "out of a small population," 201 of whom were killed, said Levine.

There is a long and proud history of Jews serving in the military in Canada, going back long before Canada was an independent country. The first identifiable Jewish soldier was Capt. Alexander Schomberg, who was born Jewish and who was in charge of the HMS Diana, a frigate that took part in the 1759 battle at the Plains of Abraham.

Jews have served in all of Canada's conflicts, including the Boer War. The museum even has a lithograph of a poster from Montreal dating to World War I, in which Jewish boys are implored in Yiddish to fight for king and country, said Levine, who served as a lance corporal in the RAF before immigrating to Canada.

During that conflict, Canadian soldiers were considered part of the British armed forces, and they were ministered to by Rabbi Michael Adler, who led the Jewish chaplaincy service in the British army.

Currently, there are two Jewish chaplains in service, Rabbi Lazer Danzinger, who is posted to Denison Armoury in Toronto, and Rabbi Bryan Bowley, who is part of 8 Wing based in CFB Trenton. Both hold the rank of captain.

Rabbi Danzinger has served as a chaplain since 2008, first in the reserves and from 2010 in the regular forces. He is, he said, the first full-time Jewish chaplain since World War II. But like all chaplains, tending to one's own flock is only a part of his duties in the military.

"We minister to our own, facilitate the worship of others, and we care for all," said Rabbi Danzinger.

There are Jews serving in the Canadian military who request his assistance in obtaining kosher food – it is readily available to those who want it – and who have asked him to help in other aspects of their service, he said.

Rabbi Danzinger notes that he travelled to Mexico in 2011 to officiate at the wedding of Maj. Alain Cohen, who requested a traditional Jewish wedding under a chupah, but wanted to incorporate some military traditions as well.

"It was possibly the first Jewish military wedding in Canada," Rabbi Danzinger said.

Allan Rubin likewise had the benefit of a chaplain's service for an important life cycle event. Rubin, president of the JCMM, served from 1957 to 1962 in the RCAF photo reconnaissance branch. His son, Stephen, was born while he was stationed in Germany. Naturally, he wanted his son to have a bris, and it was performed by a military chaplain, although in his case, it was someone from the U.S. Army base in Verdun, France.

The bris was conducted in a Protestant chapel at the military base, but not before a crucifix was removed and replaced with a Magen David, Rubin said.

Many of those attending were not Jewish, demonstrating that the multifaith aspect of a chaplain's work is not necessarily of recent vintage. ■

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Hillel

Cantors CD to highlight 2014 Tarbut festival

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

A major highlight of the fifth annual Tarbut: Festival of Jewish Culture is the official launch Nov. 16 of a new CD of a 1985 concert featuring Winnipeg's cantors at that time.

"The concert was unique in the number of cantors who were invited to participate. Most cantorial concerts highlight just one or two cantors. That concert was an historic landmark," Michael Eskin, who performed that night, notes. "It was from a cantorial golden age in Winnipeg."

More than 1,000 members of the community packed Rosh Pina Synagogue (now Congregation Etz Chayim) at the time to hear cantors Judah Smolack, then Rosh Pina's cantor; Tzvi Taub and Louis Berkal of Shaarey Zedek; Arkie Berkal, Beth Israel; Yaacov Orzech, Bnay Abraham; Michael Eskin, Herzlia Adas-Yeshurun; Gerry Daien, Chevra Mishnayes; Richard Yaffe, Temple Shalom, and David Boroditsky, retired from the Talmud Torah Synagogue. The cantors were accompanied by pianist Sheldon Laveman, while duo Kinzey Posen and Shayla Fink also contributed to the musical evening.

Eskin said the concert was taped and a few copies were made and distributed to people who were involved.

And that's where it rested until last fall.

"My wife, after listening to the tape, suggested that it would be nice if the concert could be made available on a CD," he said.

He and Kinzey Posen subsequently applied to the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba and received a grant for the project.

"There were some challenges," Eskin said. "The original recording was taped in the midst of the audience... Kinzey was able to edit it, though, and create a master copy. The CD turned out very nicely."

At the launch, some of the cantors from the original concert – Eskin, Smolack, Daien, Berkal and Yaffe will perform. They will be joined by present-day cantors Anibal Mass, Shaarey Zedek, Tracy Kasner Greaves, Congregation Etz Chayim, and Len Udow, Temple Shalom.

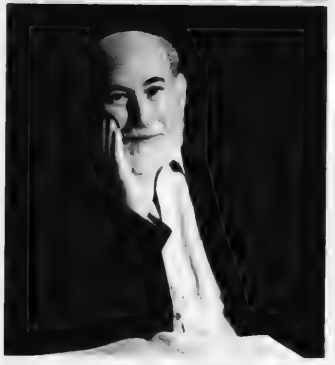
The Tarbut festival, Nov. 15 to 23, offers primarily Israeli films and Israeli-based musicians and writers. As usual, however, the nine-day event has something for everyone including the Jewish Book Fair selling books, music and Chanukah gifts.

The CD is available from Eskin (204-488-9085, email: eskin@cc.umanitoba.ca) for $10. He said the proceeds will go to the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba in support of creative activities in the local Jewish community.

Tarbut evolved from the long-standing Jewish Book Fair, which the community had been hosting for the Asper Campus for many years. Five years ago, the Rady JCC, which had long been charged with organizing the week-long Jewish Book Fair, decided to change the format of the yearly event and expand its mandate. Authors are still featured, and many books and Jewish crafts are still on display, but the program has been enhanced with concerts, comedy, Jewish-themed movies and an exhibit featuring the art of Winnipeg Jewish artists.

The literary guest stars of Tarbut 14, says Rady JCC assistant executive director Tamar Barr, are Naomi Ragen and Rabbi Joseph Telushkin. Rabbi Telushkin's more than 15 books on Jewish thought have been among the most widely read books on Judaism published in the last two decades. Ragen, a leader for women's rights in Israel, is the author of nine international best-selling novels and a hit play, *Women's Minyan*.

The musical programs once again feature Israeli performers and a tribute to a Jewish American star. This year, it's Carole King, whose life and career are the focus of a Tony Award-winning play currently on Broadway. Local singer Anna Lisa Kirby will provide her interpretations of King's songs.



Pictured, clockwise from top left, are singer/songwriter Michael Greilsammer, Yemen Blues, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin and author Naomi Ragen.

Israeli music will be represented by the Yemen Blues band, a combination of Israeli and New York-based musicians who have appeared in Winnipeg several times in the past, and Israeli violinist and singer/songwriter Michael Greilsammer, who is known as the world's only Jewish reggae violin player.

The films being screened at Tarbut include *Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy*, narrated by Joel Grey, and *Wunderkinder*, the story of two Jewish and one German child prodigies whose lives are turned upside down by the Holocaust.

The art exhibit, which runs throughout the festival, this year focuses on the photos of Keith Levit, Manuel Sousa and Samantha Katz.

"Tarbut has become the pre-eminent arts event in the community, garnering more and more attention each and every year," Barr says. "We drew more than 3,200 people last year and expect to better that number this year." ■

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Baron Byng class of '39 hopes 75th reunion sets record

JANICE ARNOLD
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They were the children of struggling Jewish immigrants, raised in poverty during the Depression in a tight-knit "ghetto" at a time when the sight of anti-Semitic fascists marching in the streets was commonplace.

When they graduated from Baron Byng High School on Montreal's St. Urbain Street in 1939, these ambitious teens were plunged into a world war. Almost all the boys signed up. After the war, they entered adulthood in a changed society.

These circumstances may explain the unshakeable bond that developed among the 149 students in that class, virtually all of them Jewish in a nominally Protestant school taught almost entirely by WASP teachers.

The class of '39 has been holding reunions almost every year for the past 50 years, and with their recent 75th get-together, the organizers believe this time they will qualify for Guinness World Records.

Nine of those graduates – now average age 92 – attended. Chief organizer Eddy Wolkove, who can take the lion's share of the credit for keeping the classmates in touch over the passing decades, says he will inquire with Guinness as to whether they have indeed set a record.

"I was in touch with Guinness a few years ago, and at that time, the record was held by a class from a Pennsylvania school that had held at 71st anniversary reunion," said Wolkove, a chartered accountant who served numerous Jewish community organizations, most notably Canadian Jewish Congress.

In any event, classmate George Nashen quipped: "We intend to keep on holding reunions as long as there are two of us standing."

The others present were Mamie (Miller) Trager, Mildred (Israelovitch) Leiter, Sam Levy, Dr. Gilbert Rosenberg, Nina (Levenstone) Cass, Jack Sibales and Ruth (Reisler) Feigelson.

Reunited members of the 1939 Baron Byng High School graduating class are, from left, Eddy Wolkove, Dr. Gilbert Rosenberg, Ruth Feigelson, Nina Cass, Mamie Trager, George Nashen, Mildred Leiter and Sam Levy. Missing Jack Sibales. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Wolkove has tried to keep track of his classmates over the years, but is not sure how many are still alive. Nashen estimates there are about 20, which makes the turnout of nine quite extraordinary.

The great majority of the class of '39 remained in Montreal, they say, with the rest scattered around Canada, the United States and elsewhere.

The lure of Baron Byng and the kids who went there was strong from the outset. Trager remembered that she fibbed about which side of Hutchison Street she lived on so that she could get into Baron Byng and not have to go to Strathcona Academy in Outremont, where she was supposed to go after finishing Fairmount elementary school.

Despite their cultural differences, these students also formed a strong attachment to their teachers. At the early reunions, the teachers were always invited to attend, including the formidable principal, a "Dr. Asprey."

Wolkove recalled meeting with Asprey at the seniors' residence he was by then living in when the first reunion was to be held in 1964. "He received me and thanked me for the invitation to be guest speaker, but said he had to decline. He wanted us to remember him as he was then, and not the deteriorated old man he had become. Instead, he gave us a written message, which we read."

Other legendary teachers were fondly eulogized at this reunion, notably art teacher Anne Savage, an accomplished artist, and music teacher D.M. Herbert. Their former students credited them with instilling in them a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Past reunions always included sing-alongs of the songs they learned at school, rousing renditions of such British standards as *Land of Hope and Glory*.

The reunions used to be daylong affairs at the country home of the late alumnus, Ottawa real estate developer Saul Goldfarb, who passed away last year. The 75th was much simpler: Sunday breakfast at a popular West End eatery with a few reminiscences and a chance to ask each other if they knew whatever happened to such-and-such.

Nashen said most of their teachers were outstanding – many of the men were World War I veterans – but a few were truly eccentric, perhaps affected by the war. "One would call us a bunch of Arabs," he said, but he can recall no anti-Semitism of the mean-spirited variety among them.

Most were very decent. Cass, a former Hebrew Academy administrator, recalled that teachers were known to advocate on their students' behalf when their parents could not pay the school fees, which ranged from $3 to $5 a month, depending on the grade, an exorbitant amount for many families.

"They pleaded with the administration to let them stay in school. Some even paid the fee themselves, even though teachers were not paid very well," she said.

Wolkove remembered the kindness of gym teacher W.E. Jones, who used to come in on Saturday mornings to supervise badminton games, lending the kids rackets they could not afford to own.

"He used to joke: 'You should be in synagogue. I'm a better Jew than you.' We would ask why, and he would say, 'Look at my initials, turn them around and they spell 'Jew.'"

Service during World War II – many of the '39 class went into the air force because it was perceived as the elite branch – opened up opportunity for the boys that they might not otherwise have.

Like Levy, who became a biochemist, they took advantage of their veterans benefits and went to university. The class produced a high proportion of doctors, lawyers, professors and accountants.

"It's a wonder what our class accomplished," Nashen said. "We are really distinct."

Two class members were killed while serving: Bob Berger and Joe Gertel. A few, including Sibales, whose plane went down in Germany were prisoners of war.

Levy is the class archivist. He has been collecting a "ton" of photos and documents over the years about his class and others at Baron Byng. This material is being considered for a "virtual" museum celebrating Baron Byng, which was in existence from 1921-81, a project being undertaken by George Sand and other graduates.

Interviews with the '39 classmates are also being conducted for the project, whose completion date is not yet known. ■

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Commentary

A third intifadah?

David Berlin

In September 2000, a defiant Ariel Sharon marched up to the Temple Mount, accompanied by an army of bodyguards. This action, with which Sharon launched his political campaign, was followed by the second intifadah, which lasted four years.

Eleven hundred Israelis, including many whose only sin was to be on the wrong bus at the wrong time, got limbs torn from limbs even before they were allowed to give up their ghost. At the intifada's most virulent, it became impossible to stop attacks inside Israel, and several senior Israel Defence Forces officers were at their wits' end.

High-ranking officers contemplated resignation, not out of weariness, but because they believed themselves incapable of doing the job for which they were hired. The state and the people of Israel, these officer said, could not be defended against human bombs whose rage and fantasies of the hereafter were so vivid as to make their own lives seem worthless.

That all happened less than a decade ago. But, somehow (and it boggles my mind to understand just how), memory of those horrors have faded to such an extent that at least a dozen Israeli religious and political leaders are once again tempting fate by calling on Jews to assert their right to pray on the Temple Mount, which houses Haram Al Sharif, Islam's third-holiest site.

Will this lead to a third intifadah? On Sunday, I drove to Jerusalem where the director general of Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, Brig.-Gen. (res.) Yosef Kupperwasser was scheduled to address this question.

The trip was more difficult than I expected. Shu'afat Street in Jerusalem was blocked off by a police wagon and by a handful of the more than 3,000 extra police forces recently deployed in the Jerusalem area.

Force met force. The Child Development Center at the corner of Shu'afat and Maari streets was closed, and the young Palestinian workers poured out to face the police.

From where my car was stopped, I could see the remains of a train station that was burned to the ground by Palestinians who believe the light rail system that runs through Arab neighbourhoods is no less than Israel's latest move to annex all of Jerusalem.

To the wall of an adjacent building was affixed a huge poster-size photograph of Muhammed Abu Khdeir, the 16-year-old Arab lad who was bludgeoned and burned alive by young Israeli hoodlums seeking revenge for the kidnapping and murder of three Jewish youths.

Most probably, the Israeli authorities had already fined those responsible for the unlawfully displayed poster. Most probably, the poster had been removed, replaced by a second and then a third. A recently passed law allowing Israeli police to levy heavy fines and prison terms on Palestinians who throw stones, abuse police or nail unlawful posters to walls is being enforced everywhere in Israel.

When my car was finally waved through, I found myself driving past several more burned down train stops, past the station on Shimon Hatzadik Street – where Ibrahim Al-Akri had recently plowed through an intersection killing two Israelis, including the 17-year-old grandson of Rabbi Shimon Badani, a member of the Shas Party Council of Torah Sages.

Speaking at the young Badani's funeral, Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef reiterated the Jewish prohibition against prayer on the Temple Mount. Rabbi Yosef then lashed out at colleagues – Rabbi Nahum Rabinowitz, Rabbi Dov Lior, Rabbi Haim Druckman – for encouraging yeshiva students to ignore both the religious prohibition and the Israeli law that expressly forbids Jews from praying on the Temple Mount.

"This is the place to call on the esteemed public to stop this incitement," Rabbi Yosef said. "From here, a call is heard forbidding any Jew from going up to the Temple Mount. Stop this… so that the blood of the people of Israel may stop being spilled."

But Kupperwasser did not blame the rabbis.

On the contrary, during the first 20 minutes of his talk, the chief of strategic affairs showed clips of Hamas leaders and Fatah members of Parliament, including the infamous Jibril Rajub, clearly inciting their people against the Jews. The clips are chilling. "Do you have a car, a kitchen knife?" one Hamasnik asks. "If so, use it against those Jews who seek to defile our holy sites."

"The message I want to send," Kupperwasser told a room filled with reporters who had heard it all a thousand times before, "is that the current Palestinian violence against the Jewish state is well planned, racist, undertaken deliberately."

Will this lead to a third intifadah? Kupperwasser said it was too early to tell. ■

David Berlin is the founding editor of The Walrus magazine.

Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount in 2000, top, was followed by the second intifadah. Clashes between Palestinians and police on Nov. 2 followed the closing of the Al Aqsa Mosque. FILE PHOTO/ FLASH 90

OPINION

Inshallah, *there should be peace in Jerusalem*

Yair Lootsteen

I see "A" several times a week. He cleans the stairwell and public areas of my apartment building in Jerusalem. He does the same in several other buildings in my neighbourhood, usually bringing two sons along with him. They're in their late teens, early 20s.

I see them working when I'm out walking my dog.

"A" and his sons are Arabs, Muslims, from Silwan, an area just south of the Old City in east Jerusalem. He's a nice enough fellow, and when opportunity allows, we exchange niceties and sometimes a bit more. In Hebrew of course – his Hebrew is good, and my Arabic is basically non-existent. I ask him about his take on things: Jews and Arabs, Fatah and Hamas. It's not often I get to speak to Arabs. In the "forever united" Jerusalem, I dare say most Jews couldn't name more than one or two Arab neighbourhoods in the city, let alone speak civilly to one of their residents.

In late October, Abdelrachman Al-Shaludi, a resident of Silwan, ran over a group of Jewish commuters at a crowded light-rail station in the northern part of the city, killing three-month old Chaya Zissel Braun, and Karen Yemima Muscara, a 20-something citizen of Ecuador who had come to Israel to convert to Judaism. He injured seven other people. Security camera footage of the incident seems to portray an intentional act of barbarism.

Al-Shaludi tried to escape the scene, but was shot and killed by a passerby. Riots began in his neighbourhood. He was declared a *shahid* – a martyr. Relatives claimed it was a traffic accident, that Al-Shaludi had no motive.

I met "A" a day or two later and asked him how anyone could justify killing a three-month old infant. He said you can't and that declaring Al-Shaludi, who knew nothing of Islam, a *shahid*, was plainly wrong.

We spoke of the violence that's been sweeping across east Jerusalem for the past several months. This time things seem different. During the two intifadahs, Israel prided itself in the fact Jerusalem's Arabs didn't join the fray. Now they seem to be leading it.

"A" has six kids. He leaves home early each morning and returns late every night. It's the only way to support his family. He tells me I spend more time with my dog than he does with his children. That you can't compare the level of services, schools, parks, cleanliness, development in east and west Jerusalem. That classrooms are packed and kids have nothing to do after school, and their dads aren't around to control them.

Police and border patrols are coming into Silwan more than they used to, and even more since Jews started buying up property in the neighbourhood and Israeli families – "settlers" he calls them – have moved in.

And "A" is a devout Muslim. Fridays he likes to pray on what we call the Temple Mount and he calls Haram al-Sharif. But for several weeks, he hasn't been able to do so. He's 47, and the complex has been declared out of bounds for men under 50. It upsets him, but he takes it in stride and prays elsewhere. For many others, especially younger men, it's a much bigger issue.

I ask him if there's a solution. He can't really see one and isn't very optimistic.

We parted. I went to a meeting. He continued mopping. We wished each other that God willing – *inshallah* – things would calm down.

I love my Jerusalem and that my kids are proud Jerusalemites who can't see themselves living anywhere else, at least for now. "A" and his family aren't going anywhere soon, either.

Let's hope for the wisdom and creativity needed to make this wonderful city a place for all of us to live happily and in peace.

Inshallah! ■

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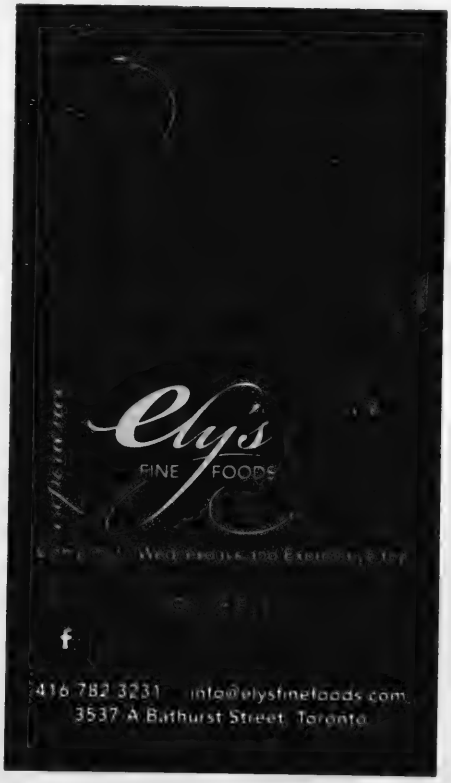

U.S. Supreme Court judges talk Jewish at GA opening

JTA
OXON HILL, MD

U.S. Supreme Court justices Stephen Breyer and Elana Kagan talked about their Jewish identities at the opening plenary of the 2014 General Assembly conference of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Speaking before a crowd of more than 2,000 people at a conference centre just outside Washington, D.C., Breyer said the most remarkable thing about there being three Jews among the nine Supreme Court justices is how unremarkable it is in America today.

Kagan, the other justice on the panel discussion moderated by NPR correspondent Nina Totenberg, said her Jewish identity was the one thing that didn't come up during her confirmation process.

"The one thing nobody ever said, the one thing I never heard was, 'We don't need a third Jewish justice,' or 'There's a problem with that,'" she said. "So that's a wonderful thing. My grandmother would have said 'Only in America.'"

Kagan also talked about her bat mitzvah, crediting Rabbi Shlomo Riskin – then of the Lincoln Square Synagogue on Manhattan's Upper West Side (and now rabbi in Efrat, West Bank), with enabling the ceremony, even though that sort of thing was not done in Orthodox synagogues when Kagan was a kid.

The bat mitzvah wasn't exactly identical to her brother's, Kagan said – it was called a bat Torah, took place on Friday night rather than Saturday and had her chanting the Haftorah portion rather than the Torah portion – but it was meaningful and groundbreaking nonetheless.

"We reached a kind of deal: it wasn't a full bar mitzvah, but it was something," she said. "Rabbi Riskin was very gracious, and I think it was good for the synagogue."

Breyer said the great divisions of the world today are between those who believe in the rule of law and those who don't. "And that is a battle, and we're on the right side of that," he said.

The theme of this year's General Assembly was "The world is our backyard," and scheduled speakers included U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden and, via satellite, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"This year's GA will remind us of why federation is relevant and critical," GA co-chair Howard Friedman said. ■

Obama manages expectations on Iran

JTA
WASHINGTON D.C.

U.S. President Barack Obama tamped down expectations about brokering a nuclear deal with Iran before the upcoming deadline.

"There's still a big gap," Obama told *Face the Nation* host Bob Schieffer on Sunday on the 60th-anniversary broadcast of the CBS program. "We may not be able to get there."

Nov. 24 is the deadline for a nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers. American negotiators in recent weeks have sounded more optimistic about achieving an agreement.

Obama said there have been "significant negotiations."

Israel rejects any deal that allows Iran to continue enriching uranium at even minimal levels, which it is believed that a nuclear deal with Iran will include. Israel believes any enrichment capacity leaves Iran as a nuclear threshold state.

Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, posted Sunday on his official Twitter account a plan to eliminate Israel, or what he called the "fake Zionist regime."

"The elimination of Israel does not mean the massacre of the Jewish people in the region," he said.

The plan, which Khamenei believes will be palatable to the international community, calls for a referendum by "all the original people of Palestine including Muslims, Christians and Jews wherever they are." ■

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Beth Din of America adds female board member

JTA

One of the pre-eminent rabbinic courts of North America is set to add a female board member.

The Beth Din of America invited Dr. Michelle Friedman, the founder and chair of the Department of Pastoral Counseling at New York's Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT), to join its board. Founded in 1999, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah is a modern Orthodox rabbinical seminary that has, at times, clashed with the Beth Din of America's parent organization, the Rabbinical Council of America.

Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann, director of the Beth Din of America, told the N.Y. *Jewish Week* that the rabbinic court had been looking to "repopulate" the board since 2012. Friedman was one of "several women" invited to join the 30-person board. The beit din has had women on its board since "at least 1998," Weissman told *JTA* in an email, and currently has "a handful" of female board members.

Founded in 1960 by the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the Beth Din of America adjudicates commercial, communal and matrimonial conflicts in accordance with Jewish law. In 1994, it became an independent organization, with a separate board of directors.

The board on which Friedman will serve has "no role in formulating halachic policy or halachic decision-making," Weissmann told the *Jewish Week*. Like other board members, Friedman's role will focus on governance and fundraising.

The Beth Din of America and the RCA also jointly oversee the Geirus Protocols and Standards (GPS), which govern a regional network of rabbinic courts for conversion.

Friedman's invitation comes after the RCA announced last week that it would form a new committee to review its conversion process. The committee – which included five female members, a first in the RCA's history – was formed in response to the Oct. 14 arrest of Rabbi Barry Freundel, a former member of the RCA who was charged with voyeurism for allegedly filming women (including conversion candidates) in the mikvah, or ritual bath.

According to the RCA's website, Freundel's arrest "brought to light the need for a thorough review of GPS to identify changes that will ensure a more effective and appropriate conversion process."

On Friedman's invitation to join the board of the Beth Din of America, Rabbi Asher Lopatin, the president of the YCT rabbinical school, told *JTA*, "Yeshivat Chovevei Torah is very proud of [Friedman]. She is one of the key founders and key parts of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, and we are very happy that the beth din has made this decision." ■

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Stabbing attacks kill one woman

Police and ambulances arrive at the scene where a soldier was stabbed Nov. 10 after a struggle with a Palestinian who attempted to grab his weapon at the Haganah Train Station in Tel Aviv. He was evacuated to Sheba Hospital in Tel HaShomer where he was in critical condition. Later, a young woman was killed and two people were injured in a stabbing attack at the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut Monday afternoon, in the second terrorist attack of its kind in a day.

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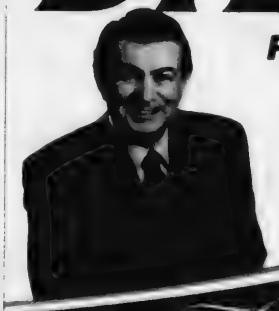

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Netanyahu blames Hamas, IS, for riots

MARISSA NEWMAN AND **STUART WINER**
JERUSALEM

Riots broke out in many Arab towns in northern Israel last week after the shooting of a 22-year-old Arab Israeli. ISRAEL SUN PHOTOS

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Nov. 9 that the Israeli authorities would act forcefully against Arab-Israeli protesters who are "calling for the destruction of the State of Israel."

The riots that have been sparked in Arab-Israeli towns in the Galilee last weekend are being instigated by Hamas, the Islamic Movement and the Palestinian Authority, he added.

"Israel is a nation of law. Whoever violates the law will be punished severely. We will not tolerate disturbances and riots. We will take determined action against those who throw stones, firebombs and fireworks, and block roads, and against demonstrations that call for our destruction," Netanyahu told ministers at last Sunday's cabinet meeting.

"We are not prepared to tolerate more demonstrations in the heart of our cities in which Hamas or Islamic State flags are waved and calls are made to redeem Palestine with blood and fire – calling in effect for the destruction of the State of Israel.

"I have instructed the interior minister to use all means, including evaluating the possibility of revoking the citizenship of those who call for the destruction of the State of Israel," he added.

The prime minister said it was the government's responsibility to defend the Jewish historical connection to the land of Israel, which he said Palestinian leaders negated.

"Standing behind this incitement are, first of all, the various Islamic movements: Hamas and the Islamic Movement in Israel. In the forefront, at least vis-a-vis the agitation on the Temple Mount, are the Mourabitoun and the Mourabiat – movements engaged in incitement and which are financed by funds from extremist Islam," he said. "I have instructed that they be outlawed."

Netanyahu continued with a strident criticism of Palestinian leaders.

"But also standing behind this incitement is the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Abu Mazen [Mahmoud Abbas]. The website of their official body, Fatah, explains that the Jewish people were, in effect, never here, that the Temple was never here, that David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the kings and prophets of Israel are all fiction. This is nothing less than a clear attempt to distort not only the modern truth, but also the historical truth. Against these distortions and these gross lies, we must tell the truth to our people and to the world," he said.

Netanyahu also addressed the call by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khameini, for the "annihilation" of Israel, as well as a report that the Iranians may have violated the terms of the interim nuclear deal.

The international community "faces a simple choice – to surrender to Iran's demands in a deal that's dangerous not only for Israel, but for the entire world, or to demand that Iran dismantle its capabilities to produce a nuclear weapon," he said.

"Israel will not agree to a deal that leaves Iran as a nuclear threshold state – it is a danger to us all."

The prime minister's remarks came amid a fresh wave of riots in the capital and northern Israel, as many Arab Israelis took to the streets to protest what they said was the unjustified killing of 22-year-old Kafr Kanna resident Kheir Hamdan by police last weekend.

Finance Minister Yair Lapid also addressed the riots in the cabinet meeting, urging the government to take a more proactive role in calming tensions.

"Ministers, members of the government and Knesset members need to engage in putting out flames, not fanning them. We have to continue living here together, and Israeli police must continue to operate within the Arab sector. The fact that politicians are using this incident to gain political capital shows a lack of national responsibility," Lapid said in a statement.

Overnight last Sunday, Israeli Arabs removed an Israeli flag from a police station near Misgav in the north, Army Radio reported, replacing it with a Palestinian flag. Police officers removed the Palestinian banner and raised the Israeli flag over the station a short while later and launched an investigation into the incident.

Riots near the northern Arab town of Taibe forced the closure of Route 444 on the morning of Nov. 9 until police arrived to disperse the crowds.

Protesters burned tires and police arrested an 18-year-old suspected of involvement in the disturbances as police officers brought the riot to an end. The road was reopened a short while later.

In a separate incident, a swastika symbol was spray-painted on a bus stop at a junction in the northern Arab town of Fureidis, near Haifa.

Thousands of Arab protesters massed along the main street of Kafr Kanna, protesting Hamdan's death. The town mayor called the incident "murder in cold blood."

Arab Israeli umbrella groups called a general strike on Sunday in protest of the shooting, and Israel Radio reported that further demonstrations were expected. In line with the strike, many Arab schools and colleges were shuttered.

Businesses closed en masse in several Arab towns. Partial closures were also evident in other towns. In the mixed Arab-Jewish city of Acre, most Arab businesses opened normally. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Chief rabbi tells Jews to stay away from Temple Mount

JTA
JERUSALEM

An Israeli chief rabbi urged Jews to stay away from the Temple Mount in order to prevent bloodshed.

Yitzhak Yosef, Israel's chief Sephardi rabbi, made the call during the funeral last Friday of Shalom Ba'adani, 17, who died that morning in hospital from wounds he sustained on Nov. 5 when a Palestinian terrorist hit him and 12 others with his car. Ba'adani was the second fatality from that attack, which also claimed the life of an Israel Border Guard soldier. The terrorist, Ibrahim abu-Achari, was shot dead by other Border Guard officers.

"This is the place to call on the esteemed public to stop this incitement, from here a call is heard, forbidding any Jews from going up to the Temple Mount. From here a call is heard to stop this so that the blood of the People of Israel may stop being spilled," Rabbi Yosef said.

Members of the Jewish Home Party criticized Rabbi Yosef for calling to Jews to stay away from the Temple Mount and disputed his assertion that it led to bloodshed.

Naftali Bennett, the party's leader and Israel's economy minister, wrote on Facebook: "Honorable Chief Rabbi, Jewish blood was spilled because Arabs murdered them."

Orit Struck, a lawmaker for the party, called the rabbi's remarks "unfortunate," "I protest the blaming of Jews for the incitement and murder committed by Arab terrorists," she said.

Israeli authorities limit Jewish worship on the mount, the holiest site in Judaism. The site is considered the third holiest in Islam. In recent weeks, Jerusalem has seen an increase in violence by Palestinians, prompting police to double its presence in the Old City of Jerusalem to 3,000 officers.

Ba'adani was the grandson of Shimon Ba'adani, a senior member of the Shas movement of Sephardic Orthodox Jews.

The Palestinian driver who killed him plowed into a light rail stop in Jerusalem, killing an Israel Border Police officer on the spot. ■

Jewish Life

Jazz player feels blessed to make music

Steve Koven's latest release, *Solo Retrospective*, is a collection of piano songs.

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Steve Koven recorded his latest CD on a piano that's been played by some of the legendary entertainers who performed at the Imperial Room of Toronto's Royal York Hotel (now the Fairmont Royal York).

During the heyday of the Imperial Room, from the 1940s to the '80s, people watched pianists Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Little Richard, Doug Riley and Don Thompson, among others, play the Imperial Room's 1929 New York Steinway D model.

The piano with so much music history is now located at Inception Sound Studios in Toronto, where jazz pianist Koven recorded six albums with his trio and where he recorded his new one, *Solo Retrospective*.

The 12 songs on Koven's latest recording were composed for solo piano, and all but three were previously released on one of the nine CDs he made with his trio (which includes bassist Rob Clutton on bass and drummer Anthony Michelli).

Since "all the songs were originally composed for solo piano, it felt natural for me to release something in original format," he said during an interview at a coffee shop in uptown Toronto. But he added that as he had grown accustomed to playing the majority of songs with the trio, he had to "rethink" them for *Solo Retrospective*.

Koven's musical influences range from the classical composers Bach, Debussy and Satie to jazz pianists Oscar Peterson and Keith Jarrett. Jarrett "does the same thing as I do. He borrows from many idioms," Koven said.

All of Koven's influences come through on his new CD. However, you don't need to be a jazz aficionado to appreciate this beautiful, accessible album. The CD opens with *Mist-ic*, a new composition he wrote after visiting New Brunswick's Grand Manan Island. The moody, ocean-side pictures Koven's wife, Lee-Anne Stewart, took there adorn the CD cover.

Resurgence Revisited is a dreamy composition, an homage to Chinese culture that Koven created on a day he visited the Great Wall during a tour of China. Koven was inspired to write *The Artist* in homage to the many young artists he was surrounded with when he was doing his master's degree in composition at York University. This almost reverential song was one of the compositions he created for his thesis, Music Inspired by Visual Art.

Cerventino is an animated, Latin-flavoured song Koven wrote in response to his experiences in Mexico, where he performed at Festival Cervantino in Guanajuato, one of the country's premier arts festivals.

Lily is an exquisite tribute to his wife. The final track, *Lifetime*, is a wistful tune based on first love that Koven wrote when he was 18.

Koven was raised in Toronto and comes from a musical family. "Everybody played an instrument or sang in my home. But I'm the only professional," he said, adding that he had the advantage of being the youngest of four and so his older siblings passed their musical knowledge on to him.

Koven took classical piano lessons from ages seven to 15, but he got his formative jazz exposure at home, from his father, Irv, whom he called his greatest musical influence.

"I grew up listening to my dad play boogie-woogie, stride piano, all the standards," he recalled, adding that on the weekends, the whole family would listen to classical music and opera on CBC Radio.

Koven, 50, said he feels blessed to be able to make music his life, whether he's performing or teaching contemporary improvisation and jazz piano at York. Since 1997, his trio has played on five continents, including at gigs they got through Canadian embassies and High Commissions.

He said he especially enjoys South America, which has had a huge influence on his music. "People don't have a lot, but they have smiles on their faces. They believe in 'festa,' celebrating."

Most of his music is sold in Japan, he added. "The Japanese really embrace jazz."

Koven, however, worries about the lack of local performance opportunities, especially for musicians just coming up. "I think it has something to do with the Internet," he said, nodding toward his laptop, adding that people don't want to go out because entertainment, mostly free, is available online.

But "you can never experience the true feeling of music watching it on computer," he said, pointing out that there's a different energy in a live-performance situation where musicians and the audience connects.

Koven lamented the loss, over the years, of the city's great jazz venues, among them the Colonial Tavern, George's Spaghetti House, the Senator, Bourbon Street and the Montreal Bistro. Currently, other than the Jazz Bistro, the Rex, the Lula Lounge and Blakbird on Bloor Street West, the clubs have been replaced by a few smaller venues, where club owners sometimes expect musicians to "pass the hat," instead of paying them.

"Because clubs are no longer available, artists are forced to become producers," Koven said. Wearing his producer's hat, Koven, along with his wife, are presenting their annual evening of music and comedy on Jan. 10 at Todmorden Mills, 67 Pottery Rd., Toronto. ■

For tickets and to order Koven's new album, visit www.stevekoven.ca.

New book fair launches in Toronto

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

When Steven Levy describes the circumstances that brought him together with the two other organizers of this week's debut of Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair, he uses the word bashert.

"This combining of our talents has been so amazing," he said. "If I can stand back and be objective, as a longtime organizer of trade shows, I can say I've never seen anything like this event, the complexity of it."

Levy, a Montreal-born social worker turned businessman, worked for 13 years as president of Informa Canada, a company that produces consumer shows, like Toronto's annual One of a Kind show. Levy's brainchild.

Just weeks after his retirement last spring, Levy was approached by John Calabro, an author and founder of a small publishing house, Quattro Books, and Rita Davies, former executive director of the Toronto Arts Council and head of culture for the City of Toronto.

After both had ostensibly retired, they began conducting a feasibility study about the prospect of launching a large-scale, international and multilingual book fair in Toronto. They were seeing real demand within the literary industry, and were eager to fill the niche.

Calabro had attended major book fairs abroad, including the Paris Book Fair and the Guadalajara International Book Fair, and wondered why Toronto lacked a similar model. He noted that existing literary events, like Word on the Street, aren't as large, international or multicultural in scope, nor are they quite so multi-faceted.

"Inspire! is partly a marketplace where people can discover and buy books, partly an authors festival and partly a forum for workshops," he said. "It's a microcosm of the literary landscape in Canada, including indigenous and ethnic writers. This has never been done in Canada before."

The fair will feature around 1,000 authors, coming from across Canada and other countries; 25 different languages will be represented.

"We tried to have Israel participate," Levy said, "but it wasn't possible this year, which was a disappointment for me."

More than 400 authors will give readings and speak, and roughly 500 will be stationed to sign books and meet fans.

John Calabro, left, and Steven Levy are two of the three organizers of the first annual event, Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

Levy noted that the fair has a "healthy representation" of Jewish writers, such as Allison Pick, David Bezmozgis, Karen Levine and Jeanne Beker, whose presentation on the memoir written by her Holocaust survivor parents is being sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation.

Big name authors include Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Day, Kelly Armstrong and Lev Grossman.

Calabro said publishers of all sizes will be present, "from the tiniest micro publisher to big Canadian publishers to international ones. We created different price points for each level, to reflect the whole industry." One section of the fair will feature authors from abroad and Canadian authors who identify with their languages and cultures.

"We'll have Polish authors and Polish Canadian authors, Indian and Indian Canadian writers, et cetera," Calabro, who is originally from Italy, explained.

Inspire!'s indigenous program includes 25 authors of First Nation, Metis and Inuit backgrounds, who are coming from around Canada.

"Finally, we have this event that has the ability to hit people of all ages, cultures, languages, new and old Canadians," he said. "We're going to produce for all of them what is the essence of every culture: the word, which people use to speak, for the stories they tell and the books they write."

Levy, Calabro and Davies, despite technically being "retirees," have been working around the clock to launch Inspire!, and put up their own money to get things started. They are already working on next years' fair. ■

Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair runs Nov. 13 to 16 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Tickets cost $25 for opening night and $15 for the day, with the option of re-admittance. They can be purchased at www.torontobookfair.ca, or at the door.

Tafillalt

The innovative Israeli musical ensemble Tafillalt made its Canadian debut with a Nov. 2 performance at Limmud Ottawa 2014. Formed in the year 2000, Tafillalt navigates the multicultural soundscape of 21st-century Israel, presenting deeply personal interpretations of traditional and modern Jewish material including Hebrew poetry from North Africa and the Middle East, chassidic niggunim (religious Jewish songs), secular Hebrew poetry, and their own original musical and literary compositions. Pictured from left are Nori Jacoby; Yair Harel, the 2014 Schusterman Visiting Artist at the University of California Berkeley; and Yonatan Niv.

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The art of storytelling in health care

DOROTHY LICHTBLAU
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dan Yashinsky, the inaugural artist-in-residence at Toronto's Baycrest Centre, takes a moment to chat with everyone who steps into a tiny library of the enormous geriatric healthcare and research complex. They've come to hear the acclaimed storyteller and writer weave a tale.

The dozen or so regulars who attend this weekly afternoon gig are Baycrest residents or clients of the centre's day programs. Many are in wheelchairs and accompanied by a family member or a personal attendant.

Yashinksy first takes a few minutes to kibbitz with the audience. After the chit-chat, Yashinsky asks, "Are there proverbs you often say? Well, last week a friend from the Philippines told a proverb that she said is well known in her country. Maybe some of you have heard it: If you forget where you come from you will not reach your destination." Audience members nod their heads.

"Names can tell something about your history. Anyone have a story about how you got your name?"

Yashinsky is drawing the audience into "a space where participants can share a love of stories as tellers and listeners," and away from nursing home routines and the challenges of aging.

Melissa Tafler, the arts in health coordinator in the Department of Culture, Arts and Innovation at Baycrest, says that the program "allows professional artists to collaborate with clinicians to provide clients with the opportunity to engage in creative expression, meaning-making and ways of working outside their usual repertoire."

She is passionate about this program, "because I have seen the positive effects it has had on participants' confidence and perspectives."

Dan Yashinsky

Yashinsky is clear about not having a therapeutic agenda. With over 30 years experience as a storyteller, teacher and author, and wide recognition as the founder of the Toronto Festival of Storytelling and co-founder of the Storytellers School of Toronto, he locates his role and goals solidly within an artistic framework.

"My purpose is to celebrate and encourage the creativity of the people I work with [including staff]. The response I've had from clinical staff is that guiding people into the world of the imagination does have a positive and perhaps a beneficial effect."

During his session in the library, Yashinsky conveys the listeners to diverse times and places in their own lives and in the world of story. In this space they are encouraged to be expansive and to express many aspects of themselves. They are not just old folks in need of care.

In this context, Rose's reading of an ironic poem, *Happiness*, receives laughs and applause. Jack's stream of Borscht Belt jokes grant him a reputation as a comedian.

When Yashinsky asks the audience, "Would you like to hear a love story?" Doris retorts, "Why not." This is a place where she has a voice and is heard.

To craft a more holistic approach to her work, Sharon Faibish, an occupational therapist in Baycrest's Psychiatric Day Program, invited Yashinsky to co-facilitate a weekly session with persons from the community who are 65 years and older and suffering from depression. Nevertheless, she had trepidations about collaborating with a non-medical professional. She wondered how much client history she should share with Yashinsky and worried about his informal way of interacting with clients. She also felt that his focus on storytelling was merely entertainment.

So together they developed a program in which group members would be encouraged to reflect on their experiences as well as engage in word play and tale telling.

In retrospect, she feels Yashinksy's artistry provided a beneficial counterpoint to the therapeutic modalities offered in the department. During sessions with Yashinsky participants aren't asked to delve into their emotions or losses. They are not reduced to persons with a disease. Faibish finds that this normalized environment allows group members to feel at ease and to enjoy social interaction and their artistic achievements.

In the library, Yashinksy brings the story of the great Khan and his wise and loving wife to an end, and then asks listeners if anyone has a love story to share. One woman describes the last time she saw her mother. A visitor from Israel remembers a childhood gift from her younger brother, the man in the wheelchair by her side.

"I judge success by the quality of listening and the quality of participation. If someone tells their own story in response to mine, that's a successful arts-based interaction," Yashinsky says. ■

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With *24 Days*, French director Alexandre Arcady (*Five Brothers, For Sasha*) offers a gripping and carefully-plotted thriller that tells the true story of the kidnapping of Ilan Halimi in a Paris suburb by The Gang of Barbarians, who expect a huge ransom as they assume that all Jews have money. Based on the book by Ilan's mother Ruth, Arcady's film follows the police as they try to keep one step ahead of the kidnappers and compassionately presents a family under the immense pressure of possibly losing their son. The film boasts a top-notch French cast that includes Pascal Elbé (*The Other Son*), Zabou Breitman (*Almost Peaceful*), Jacques Gamblin (*The Names of Love*) and Sylvie Testud (*Fear and Trembling*).
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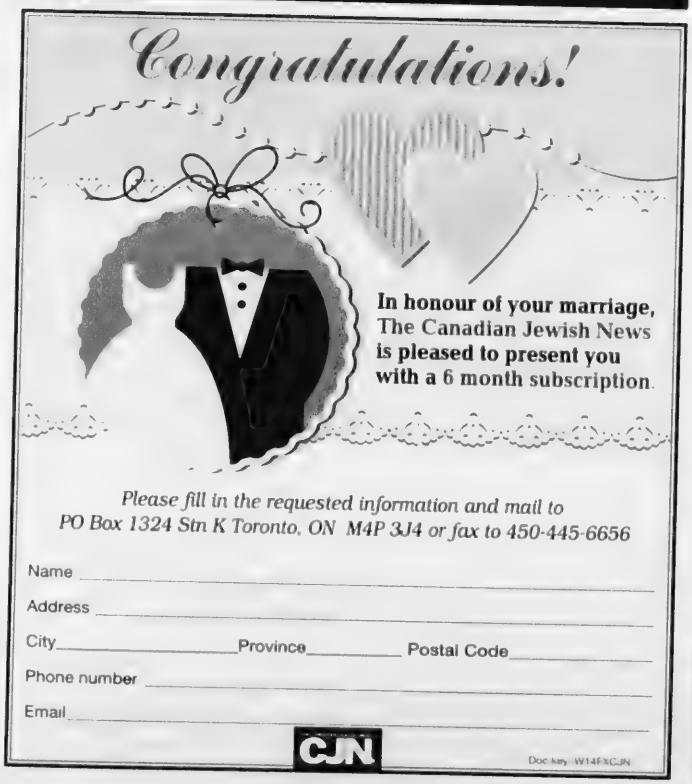
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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

WRITER CARY FAGAN WINS $20,000 LITERARY AWARD

Toronto writer **Cary Fagan**, who is known for his literary works for adults as well as for the roughly 20 books he has written for children, has won a $20,000 Writers' Trust Award in recognition of his body of work in children's literature.

The jury released a statement explaining why Fagan was chosen to receive the Vicky Metcalf Award for Literature for Young People at a ceremony in Toronto on Nov. 4. "With a kid's eye-view Cary Fagan navigates the ups and downs of life with genuine warmth and a wry sense of humour," the statement read. "His stories are a perfect balance between the comic and the dramatic. Fagan is a master storyteller."

Fagan's first book for children, *Gogol's Coat*, an adaptation of a story by Russian author **Nikolai Gogol**, was published in 1998. Most of his children's books since then have been original stories, attractively illustrated, such as *Oy, Feh, So?*, *The Market Wedding* and *Master Melville's Medicine Show*. He has also published about five novels and several collections of stories and other writings for adults.

"I am lucky to have this dual identity as a writer where I get to do both adult and children's books," he told *The CJN*. "Children's work is a very big part of my career and I make more of my living as a children's writer."

Fagan said he was delighted when notified he had won the award. "There was no announced short list and you don't know you're being considered, you're only told when it's over," he said. "It's completely surprising because it's not on your radar. At the same time, you don't have the stress of being on the short list and wondering if you're going to win."

• • •

Jonathan Goldstein at Koffler: Award-winning author, radio personality and newspaper columnist **Jonathan Goldstein** reads excerpts from his recent book, *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible!* – a series of re-imagined bibical stories reinvented as humorous, contemporary parables while exploring ideas of spirituality through a modern lens. Koffler Gallery, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Nov. 23, 2 p.m. Pay what you can. While on the premises, view the multimedia exhibit *Pardes*, which remains on view through Nov. 30.

More Sonnets from Seymour Mayne: *Cusp*, a new book of word sonnets by Ottawa professor-poet **Seymour Mayne**, is being published by Ronald P. Frye & Co. of Montreal to mark the 50th anniversary since his first collection was published. Mayne will be at the Ronald P. Frye booth at the Toronto Book Fair, Friday Nov. 14. www.torontobookfair.ca.

• • •

Names in the News: The Art Gallery of Ontario has named U.S. photographer **Lisa Oppenheim** the winner of the $50,000 Aimia-AGO photography prize for 2014, which includes a six-week, fully funded residency in Canada in early 2015. Runners-up **David Hartt** (Canada), **Elad Lassry** (Israel/US) and **Nandipha Mntambo** (South Africa) each receive $5,000 plus a six-week residency.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• *Stand By Me, The Music of the Brill Building* with **Micah Barnes**, **Billy Newton-Davis, Tyrone Gabriel** and **Gavin Hope** is a concert to benefit the Miles Nadal JCC music scholarship fund. $50. Al Green Theatre, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. www.uoft-tix.ca

• **Kevin Courrier** continues his series on the Beatles with a segment on "Help! The End of Touring." $12 drop-in, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Nov. 17, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival and the European Union Film Festival co-present *The Last Sentence*, highlighting Swedish journalist **Torgny Segerstedt's** one-man battle against Nazism and his country's policy of appeasement to Hitler. Admission free. Royal Cinema, 608 College St. (at Clinton), Wednesday Nov. 19, 8:30 p.m.

• **Jonno Lightstone** presents "Klezmer in the New World, A Musical Alchemy," a two-part exploration of what happens when a rich and resilient musical tradition is transplanted from the shtetl to the modern city – an "explosion of Jewish creativity fuelled by tension between past and present, tradition and modernity." Miles Nadal JCC, Thursdays Nov. 20 and 27, 1:30 to 3 p.m. (Doors open 1 p.m.) Drop-in $4 per lecture. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Steppin' Out Theatrical Productions presents *Annie*, directed by **Mark Cassius**. $32, $27. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St. Thursday Nov. 20 to Sunday Nov. 23. 905-787-8811, www.rhcentre.ca

• **Peter A. Barelkowski's** paintings, as featured in the exhibit Collective Memories, are on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Nov. 30. ■

Correction

In the article "Second Story celebrates its 25th year of publishing" (Nov. 6), the date of Second Story's silver anniversary bash should have been Dec. 5. Also the title of Karen Levine's book *Hana's Suitcase* was incorrectly spelled. *The CJN* regrets the errors.

Jewish comedian helps launch South African film festival

SHERI SHEFA
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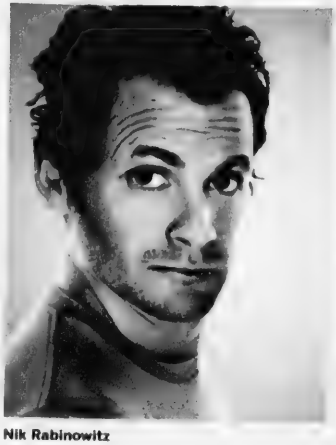

Nik Rabinowitz

According to Nik Rabinowitz's biography, it wasn't until after he obtained a business science degree in 2001 that he ventured into South Africa's comedy scene. But the way Rabinowitz tells it, he has been making people laugh for much longer than that.

He said he's been doing standup since his bar mitzvah.

"It was actually my second [gig]. My first was my bris where I peed in the mohel's left eye. Got a big laugh," Rabinowitz said.

The 38-year-old Cape Town native, who received South Africa's standup comic of the year award in 2008, is known as the world's leading Xhosa-speaking Jewish comedian (Xhosa is a South African language). He was in Toronto recently to kick off the inaugural Toronto South African Film Festival.

The festival, held Nov. 1 and 2 at the Art Gallery of Ontario, presented features and documentaries that explore South Africa's culture, history and politics.

The event is an offshoot of Vancouver's South African Film Festival, which has run successfully for the past four years. All proceeds from the festival will benefit Education Without Borders, a Canadian non-profit that provides quality education to poor communities around the world.

Speaking with *The CJN* in advance of his Oct. 30 gig at Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Rabinowitz said he was looking forward to presenting his "South African flavour" to a Canadian audience and promised to work some locally relevant material into his act.

"I do some Canadian impressions. I do the former mayor Rob Ford. I do an impression with him and a bag of flour," he said.

He said he also has a tendency to be a little politically incorrect.

"I notice that you guys are very PC. Way more than South Africa. We're very politically correct, but you guys take it to another level," he said.

"I phoned up the Drake Hotel and said I'd like to make a reservation and they said, 'No sir, we don't use that word. It's a booking.'"

Rabinowitz said it does require some work to make the material relevant to his audiences outside of South Africa, "but wherever I go, there seem to be a lot of South Africans who come. But I'm very excited to meet the Jews who have come to this part of the Diaspora. I think it's been tough for us over the last 2,000 years being in exile, especially in a cold place because they left a very hot place, so I look forward to discussing how they're coping with that."

> *I think it's been tough for us over the last 2,000 years being in exile, especially in a cold place, because they left a very hot place, so I look forward to discussing how they're coping with that.*

In addition to performing standup at the festival's launch party, Rabinowitz can be seen in two of the films featured at the festival.

"I've got a role in a movie called *Material*, which is about a young Muslim comedian who wants to be a standup comedian... I play a Jewish comedian who gives this guy his break," he said.

"There's another film, an animated feature called *Khumba*, which is a partly South African animated story about a zebra who has no stripes. I play a springbok." ■

For more information about the recent film festival, visit www.tsaff.ca, and for more about Rabinowitz, visit www.nikrabinowitz.co.za.

Message to CJN Snowbirds

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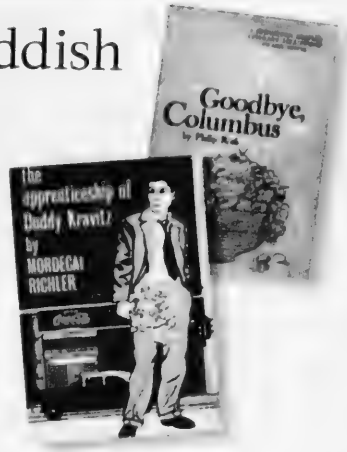
Richler, Roth, Bezmozgis and the life of Yiddish



NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Montrealers have been passing the news, via Internet links, that two locals have posted videos of themselves chatting about the city in Yiddish. The enthusiasm for this material is not necessarily based on the senders' ability to understand Yiddish. Rather, the videos' popularity – their virality, to use a more contemporary term – promises an insurance policy against the fear that Yiddish is disappearing from the scene.

Among the books nominated for this year's Giller Prize is one offering a similar insurance policy, admittedly in a nostalgic, even ironic context. Toward the end of David Bezmozgis' *The Betrayers* we find ourselves in a Crimean Jewish community centre, where the novel's main character – a well-known Israeli politician – is recognized, leading to the following repartee:

> But are you?
> I am, Kotler confirmed.
> *Redstu* Yiddish? the man inquired.
> A *bissel*, Kotler replied, to the man's great delight.
> Ah, *zeyer gut! Vos macht a yid?*
> *A yid dreitzikh*, Kotler said. A Jew gets by, his father's favoured phrase.

This scene is itself about remembering and re-encountering Yiddish, as a Russian Jew takes pleasure in the discovery of a collaborator in linguistic nostalgia, and insists that the visitor join the local "Yiddish circle."

Whether Bezmozgis knows Yiddish or needed a pro to check his tenses and idiomatic phrases, *The Betrayers* flies the flag of Yiddish survival, along with all that represents in terms of the language's pre-Holocaust importance, and its remarkably deep links to eastern European Jewish civilization.

Critics and readers have been musing about the place of Yiddish in English-language novels by Jewish writers since the 1950s. But the postwar status quo can be seen to take shape in two great late-'50s works: Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and Philip Roth's novella *Goodbye, Columbus*. Both raised hackles among some Jewish readers, but lurking in each is a careful appreciation of the future of Yiddish, even if this was not among the authors' conscious concerns.

The old Yiddish-speaking neighbourhood of Roth's Newark has become the city's "Negro section," but "still one could see the little fish stores, the kosher delicatessens, the Turkish baths" where Roth's narrator's "grandparents had shopped and bathed at the beginning of the century."

Among the first words shared by the narrator with his girlfriend's father are *gonif* and *goyim*; the first gets an authorial translation while the second is left to stand as is, possibly to remain a part of a more coded communication between writer and reader.

Beyond these, though, Roth's narrator doesn't overdo it. His Aunt Gladys feeds him pot roast and boiled potatoes, but does so while talking to him in native American English.

Richler takes a different, thornier approach. His characters, like Roth's, seem entirely borrowed from real life, with rich and quirky mid-century urban Jewish voices. There are *gonifs* and *schnorrers* among them, but the most common second language among Duddy's compatriots – most of whom are born in Canada before the war – is Yinglish, not Yiddish. Here Richler has an uncanny ear for what was becoming of Yiddish in an era when it was no longer the primary spoken language of Jewish Canadians, and when the history and culture associated with it were being set aside in favour of the prospect of assimilation, prosperity and a new affiliation with modern Hebrew. The Yinglish word, often mispresented as Yiddish, which is commonly associated with Duddy is *pusherke*. The clue for non-Yiddish speakers that Richler's lingo has North American roots, is the presence of the full English word "pusher", made lively by the addition of the common Slavic suffix *ke*.

Yinglish comes on fast and furious in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. People are *shmo-faced*, and the local grocery sells *Grepsi*. These are the kind of words that made their way, via Milton Berle and Johnny Carson, into the everyday. They are evocative not so much of spoken Yiddish as of the funny, stunted, anglicized joking lingo that was popularized as certain kinds of ethnicity informed American life.

Not long after the 1959 publication of their breakthrough books, Saul Bellow had revealing things to say about the new status of Yiddish among Jewish English-language writers. In a 1963 introduction to *Great Jewish Short Stories*, Bellow recalled the Polish-Yiddish character of his youthful Montreal upbringing. But he wondered, too, about what Yiddish writers managed to create in Canada, at great remove from the places that formed them. Of their Polish and Russian Yiddish backgrounds, these writers, Bellow tells us, "tended to idealize," to "cover it up in prayer shawls and phylacteries and Sabbath sentiment, the seder, the match-making, the marriage canopy; for sadness the *Kaddish*, for amusement the *schnorrer*, for admiration the bearded scholar. Jewish literature and art have sentimentalized and sweetened the ghetto; their 'pleasing' pictures are far less interesting of course than the real thing."

Richler set himself the task, early on, of obliterating this kind of over-sweetened Yiddish tradition. At the end of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* he provides a Jewish gangster's surprisingly engaged critique of such literary representatives of the past: "Sitting in their dark cramped ghetto corners they wrote the most mawkish, school-girlish stuff about green fields and sky. Terrible poetry, but touching . . . ."

This outlook returns, fully worked out for optimal satiric effect, in Richler's 1989 novel, *Solomon Gursky Was Here*. In light of this approach, Richler's choice of Yinglish over Yiddish in Duddy Kravitz is telling. In his life as well as in his work, he insisted on abandoning, even denigrating this "mawkish, school-girlish stuff." But Richler's characters, when he wants them to be funny and likeably Jewish, are *tummlers* (the Yinglish word for noise-making entertainers). Duddy may share a word or two of Yiddish with oldtimers, but these scenarios are rendered by Richler in English. As a *pusherke*, Duddy stands on firmly North American ground. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

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Chili for chilly days

RIVKA TAL
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

What is chili? A spicy bean dish becomes "chili" when we add a strong (or subtle) combination of seasonings with that Tex-Mex touch. Chili peppers, fresh or dried, of course, and usually tomatoes. Garlic, onions, cumin... you get the picture. There's chili con carne (chili with meat, the classic) and there's vegetarian chili. Here are two chili recipes without meat and one classic one for chili con carne. Any one of them will warm up a blustery day.

Cabbage Chili

- 1 cup dried kidney beans
- 1 medium head green cabbage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. hot paprika
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 can (28 oz.) crushed tomatoes

Sort and rinse kidney beans. Place in a large saucepan. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Boil, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Drain and add fresh water to cover beans. Partially cover and simmer for 1-1½ hours or until tender. Drain and set aside.

Preheat oven to 400. Remove outer leaves of cabbage. Wash and cut into wedges; pat dry. Chop cabbage finely. Combine beans, cabbage and all other ingredients in a lightly-greased ovenproof baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes. May also be cooked in a microwave oven, on full power, for 15 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

Pumpkin-Chard Chile Verde

- 1 1/2 cup dried kidney beans
- 1 bunch Swiss chard
- 1 1/2 tsp. canola oil
- 1 1/2 lb. fresh edible pumpkin, peeled and cut into julienne strips
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 1/2 oz. tomato paste

Soak kidney beans in cold water to cover overnight. Alternately, place in a large bowl and pour boiling water over to cover, and then soak for three hours. Sort, rinse and drain. Cook in boiling water for about one hour until almost tender. Drain and set aside.

Rinse and dry Swiss chard. Cut leaves and stems into 2-inch pieces.

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onions and garlic. Stir fry for 2-3 minutes. Add chard and pumpkin and continue to stir fry for 4-5 minutes.

Add kidney beans, seasonings and water to cover. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for approximately 20 minutes, or until beans and pumpkin are thoroughly cooked. Do not overcook. Stir in tomato paste and heat through. Serve immediately.

Note: You may substitute butternut or any other winter squash for the pumpkin, but the pumpkin lends beautiful colour. Makes 8 servings.

Chili Con Carne

You can adjust the seasoning to your liking.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 yellow onions, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. hot pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 4 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 lb. ground beef (preferably lean)
- 2 (15-oz.) cans dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (28-oz.) can whole stewed tomatoes
- 1 (28-oz.) can tomato puree
- salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Heat the oil in a large heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onions, hot pepper flakes, cumin and cayenne pepper, stirring constantly until the onions have softened, about 7 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for another 30 seconds.

Add beef and increase the heat to medium high. Cook, breaking up the beef with until no longer pink, about 10 minutes. Stir in the beans, stewed tomatoes and tomato puree. Bring to a light boil and then cover, reduce heat to barely a simmer and cook for 45 minutes.

Uncover and continue to simmer for an additional 45 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste before serving. Makes 8 servings. ■

What's New

NOV. 13 – NOV. 20

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 13

FOUR MODERN THINKERS
Rabbi Michael Stroh discusses "Four modern religious thinkers you never heard of," to Dec. 4, 10:30 a.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

LEARN TALMUD
Aaron Nussbaum leads a 3-session class on Talmud, 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Association of Jewish Libraries, Ontario chapter, presents "Literary resources on collaboration," 7 p.m., Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.

NCJW CANADA
National Council of Jewish Women of Canada hosts a reception welcoming **Robyn Lenn** and **Sharon Allentuck**. Guest speaker, MP **Mark Adler,** 7:30 p.m., 4700 Bathurst St. 416-633-5100.

Saturday, Nov. 15

SHABBAT ALIYAH
Mizrachi Canada holds its Aliyah Weekend, with speakers in synagogues across the GTA discussing Israel. A melaveh malka and panel discussion with **Rabbi Reuven Tradburks**, **Rabbi Shaul Feldman** and **Marc Rosenberg** will be held, 8 p.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation. $30. RSVP 416-630-9266 or www.mizrachi.ca

B'NAI SHALOM
B'nai Shalom Congregation, a Conservative congregation in Peel Region, meets today. 905-901-9889; www.bnaishalom.ca

MY MOTHER'S SECRET
Jenny Witterick discusses her Holocaust novel, *My Mother's Secret*, with Thornhill Lodge, B'nai Brith, 8 p.m., Rosemount Community Centre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. $5. RSVP efzwicker@rogers.com

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 27 is Nov. 17. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Remembering Menachem Begin

A photographic exhibit on the life and eastern European Jewish roots of Menachem Begin, Israel's prime minister from 1977 to 1983, opened last month at the Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus. It's open to the public through November.

Sunday, Nov. 16

SHAAR SHALOM SINGLES
Shaar Shalom Singles and Intersynagogue Singles (50+) hold a "Music and Memories Dance," featuring the music of the '50s and '60s. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., 2 Simonston Blvd., $10. 905-889-4975, ext. 72.

JEWS AND MONEY
Financial journalist **Ellen Roseman** discusses "Jews and money," 7:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation. No charge.

CLUB CHAVERUT
Club Chaverut presents music by Rita, Alex & Friend, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. RSVP 905-764-8141. $7/$10.

CAMP RAMAH AT CANDYLAND
Join Camp Ramah at Candyland, 311 Cityview Blvd., Thornhill. Open to current and prospective families, grades 1-4 for pizza dinner and fun, 4-6 p.m. RSVP **Aviva Millstone** 416-789-2193, ext. 2137 or aviva@campramah.com.

GRAND OPENING OF EITZ CHAIM
Eitz Chaim Middle School holds a Chanukat Habayit, 11 a.m. with a ribbon-cutting and tour, 80 York Hill Blvd., Thornhill.

LEARNING FOR WOMEN
Yael Gelernter discusses "*The Lord of the Flies* and Amalek," and **Rabbi David Ely Grundland** discusses "Of birds, parents and the Shchinah," 10 a.m., Forest Hill Jewish Centre, 446 Spadina Rd.

Monday, Nov. 17

OPEN HOUSE
Toronto Heschel School holds an open house, 7 p.m. RSVP admissions@torontoheschel.org or 416-635-1876, ext. 334.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Arne Kislenko discusses "Remembering the Great War: Legacies of the First World War," Temple Emanu-El, 2 p.m. $12. 416-449-3880.

ROSH CHODESH SOCIETY
Goldie Plotkin leads a 7-session class for women. Today: "The Kabbalah of sleep: How to re-energize your life," Chabad of Markham. RSVP 905-886-0421, ext. 221.

BETH EMETH'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY
Beth Emeth Synagogue celebrates its 60th anniversary with a dance to the music of the '50s and '60s, 7:30 p.m. $60 per couple, $30 per single. 416-633-3838.

Tuesday, Nov. 18

LUNCH AND LEARN I
Mike Fegelman discusses "How to identify and counter unfair media coverage of Israel," 12:15 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

LUNCH AND LEARN II
Elizabeth Legge discusses "The art of Chagall," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m. $3/$6.

ADULT EDUCATION
Bracha Feder leads a 4-week session starting tonight on "The Israelite trek through the desert: Leaders, followers and rebels," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

YIDDISH READING CIRCLE
Yiddish reading circle- *leyenkrayz*- meets at the Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 p.m. www.committeeforyiddish or 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

CHUG HATANACH
James Diamond teaches Chapter 82 of the Book of Psalms, Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 19

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Everyday, down to earth spirituality," Baycrest Terrace Synagogue, 55 Ameer Ave. 8 p.m. Free. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SCROLLS
Hana Werner discusses "The Dead Sea Scrolls," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

NAOMI RAGEN
Naomi Ragen, author of *Writing Against Terrorism* speaks at Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. $18 in advance, $25 at the door. www.bethdavid.com.

REPAIRING RAINBOWS
Lynda Fishman discusses "Repairing rainbows and the significance of loss." **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich** will lead a short healing service, 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHAI SOCIETY

Loretta Tanenbaum reviews *The Gift of Asher Lev*, with the Chai Society, noon, Beth Sholom Synagogue. $10. www.beth-sholom.net.

BENEFIT CONCERT

Rabbi Moshe Meirovich, Dr. Albert Weisbrot, Arbah B'Shir perform in a concert to benefit Prostate Cancer Canada, 8 p.m. Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. For tickets, 416-408-0208 or www.prostatecancerconcert.com.

LET'S BE BLUNT

UJA York Region and Jewish Family and Child present a forum for parents on teens and drug and alcohol use/abuse, 7:30 p.m. City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. Free but registration required. **Tanya Levy** 416-631-5817.

FROM CHURCH TO CHOLENT

Michele Sankar discusses her journey from life as a religious Roman Catholic to a Torah-observant Jew, Beth Emeth Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. $20.

LEARN ABOUT SHMITTAH

Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky gives the first of three lectures on shmittah, 8 p.m., Bnai Torah.

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Rabbi Elliott Diamond discusses "Celebration in Jewish tradition," at the launch of the Pomegranate Guild's exhibition. Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. New members welcome. pomegranateguild.wordpress.com.

Thursday, Nov. 20

JEWS OF ETHIOPIA

Judi Oron, author of *Cry of the Giraffe*, discusses "The Jews of Ethiopia," 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

BOOKS AND BISCOTTI

Elaine Newton reviews *All the Light We Cannot See* by **Anthony Doerr.** Dessert at 1 p.m., review at 1:30 p.m., Temple Emanu-El, $10.

BEST JEWISH BOOKS

Arnold Ages reviews *American Post-Judaism, Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* by **Shaul Magid,** 7:30 p.m. Beth Tzedek Synagogue.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: A 4-session group for parents. Call for pre-group assessment. Starts Nov. 20, 7 p.m.
- Beyond the chuppah, becoming a couple: A 2-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Nov. 23 and Nov. 30, 11 a.m., Adath Israel Synagogue.
- Demystifying Alzheimers and dementia: A workshop for anyone wanting to learn about dementia. Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Memoir/Legacy Writing workshop, led by **Liz Pearl,** 1-2:30 p.m., Nov. 18, 25, Dec. 2. Register by Nov. 13, 416-924-6211, ext. 0. $50.; mystery author **Howard Shrier** discusses his books, Nov. 27, 11 a.m.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Pickleball, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. **Ina Radziunas** discusses osteoporosis, Nov. 19, noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colin@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 18, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "Moe Berg: One of the most enigmatic people in Jewish history," 10 a.m.; Nov. 19, Yiddish movie (subtitles) and entertainment, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Nov. 20, lecture on men's health, 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah with live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Dec. 10; Seniors balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors. Jack Pinkus** discusses "Safe medication use," Nov. 20. Breakfast at 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Ave. Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- **Osnat Lippa** presents "The genius of Michaelangelo," Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 1 p.m.
- Stroke recovery and Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:15 a.m.
- Drop-in duplicate bridge, Thursdays 1 p.m.
- Learn to play mah-jong. Starts Jan. 21.
- Ceramics program starts Jan. 5.
- Beginners and intermediate bridge starts Jan. 19.
- Yiddish group meets Mondays at 1:30 p.m. for good conversation.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Concert to benefit Miles Nadal JCC music scholarship fund, *Stand By Me: The Music of the Brill Building*, Nov. 13, 8 p.m. 416-978-8849. $50.
- **Ian Leventhal** discusses a $2-billion project to preserve and develop the historic Jewish district of Shanghai, Nov. 13, 1:30 p.m.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles. Nov. 17, "Help! The end of touring," 7 p.m.
- **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Klezmer in the New World," Nov. 20 and Nov. 27, 1 p.m.
- Adult education about Shabbat, led by **Annie Matan,** Nov. 30, 9:30 a.m.
- Teen time. A program for kids in grades 7-8, sponsored by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Nov. 23, 1 p.m.; KatKa Team for children in grades 2-6, Nov. 30, 1 p.m. Email Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com
- *Collective Memories* by **Peter Barelkowski** is in the gallery until Nov. 30.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Beginner and intermediate mah-jong starts Jan. 13
- Ceramics classes start Jan. 7.
- Art classes for young adults (25-45 years) Jan. 5-March 23, 8 p.m.
- Learn to play bridge, starts Feb. 3.
- JCC book club discusses *Me Before You*, Nov. 25, 7 p.m.
- **Steve Rose** teaches "What would Kandinsky do?" Jan. 8-March 12, 1 p.m. ■

ASK ELLA

Bullying is not exclusive to children

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

I can't stand being around my father-in-law. At our wedding, he took credit for everything and did nothing. This year, I had a difficult time at work, and he made fun of me in front of family and friends. When I had our baby, I gained weight and had a hard time losing it. What an opportunity for him to belittle me and make sure everyone knew how weak and out of control I was. Even my husband avoids him. He didn't have an easy upbringing. I can't stand being around him, and he scares me. How do I handle a guy like this?

Mean and Nasty FIL

Dear Mean and Nasty FIL,

What you are describing is a classic adult bully. Your FIL is a man who thrives on domination and control. He needs to feel powerful and obviously has no other way to prove his worth.

Perhaps he was bullied by his own father, or became this way because of his business, but that is no excuse for treating people with a lack of respect and compassion. He knows exactly how low he is hitting by commenting on your post-pregnancy weight, especially in front of others. Your husband should have stuck up for you, but there may be some deep emotional problems between him and his dad, so you need to take control for yourself.

There is no real way of handling this other than to ignore him, but in a very deliberate way. When he says something demeaning, stop, sit up straight and tall, shoulders back, pause, look him straight in the eye for three seconds then turn away and talk to someone else. Don't pout, don't make any gesture that will give him the satisfaction of knowing he has injured you. Instead, by simply looking at him with confidence and as though you pity him, you gain the upper hand. By turning away and speaking about something completely different, you have dismissed him as though he doesn't exist.

A bully doesn't like that. You've taken away his power, his ability to take control of you and the room.

Doing this over and over will teach him that you are a force to be reckoned with and he will probably move on to someone else. Will he ever stop? Probably not. From your description, it sounds like he has been exhibiting this behaviour for a long time.

Dear Ella,

This is my first year as a teacher and I love my job – almost. It's not the kids that are the problem. It's one particular mother. I've met with her twice. She not only raised her voice with me, but she accused me of picking on her son. She has every excuse in the book for his bad behaviour and lack of work. He is nasty to other kids, and I can certainly see where he gets it. She has threatened to go to the administration and has accused me of being incompetent. I haven't spoken to anyone about this. I was hoping to handle it on my own, but now I'm not sure. What should I do?

Teacher Parent Problem

Dear Teacher Parent Problem,

Teaching kids is a noble profession and can be extremely rewarding and frustrating at the same time.

You need to learn to deal with this these types of parents from the start. Unfortunately, overbearing parents are sometimes part of the job.

If you think you are going to change her parenting methods, I can assure you that you are not. She is frustrated and has chosen you as her scapegoat. She's trying to bully you into agreeing with whatever her complaints are. Be prepared. Have all your notes ready and don't be defensive.

Hone your listening skills. Even if the parent is being condescending and loud, listen to what she is saying and be objective. Don't interrupt her. It will only fuel the fire. Instead, sit or stand tall and look straight at her. Your body posture should be confident. Determine if there is any truth to her accusations.

For future meetings, bring in a colleague or the principal for support. Every teacher goes through this as some point. Don't be shy to ask for help or ideas. Each school will have protocol on how to handle these situations. Above all, you're a teacher. Don't let this incident affect how you treat her son. Each child should be treated equally. ■

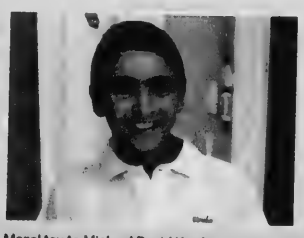
Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Family Moments

Mazel tov to our parents Fran & Barry Stein on their 50th wedding anniversary and many more. All our love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Aedden Rothman had his fifth birthday party Nov. 2. His "saftah" Sima Teva and parents Shayle & Noa Rothman, and Orrie and Ariyel helped him celebrate.

Happy 103rd birthday Betty Rumberg! The "AQUA BABES" and all your family and friends send their love and best wishes for continued good health.



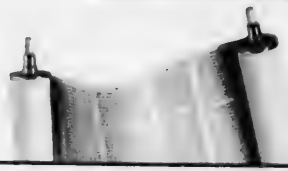
Mazal tov to Michael David Knafo on becoming a bar mitzvah!! We love you! Mamie Simy & Papi Robert Abitan.

Gypsy & Jordan Fisher and Gabriel announce the birth of Pera Yogesha, Oct. 29, Victoria, B.C. Grandparents, Joanne & Barry Fisher, Hugh Wilson of Australia.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Chayei Sarah | Genesis 23:1 - 25:18



Rabbi Ilan Acoca explains why failure is necessary in order to succeed
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl says respectful relations lead to the Land of Promise
Rabbi Catharine Clark argues Rebecca's hastiness stands as a powerful reminder to slow down

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

I remember as a child once thinking about Abraham buying a burial plot for his wife Sarah. It seems like Abraham failed. Why would he pay for it if it was offered to him for free by Ephron the owner of *Mearat Hamechpela*? As I grew older, I understood that Abraham did not fail at all. Abraham was guided by God to buy it in order not to allow any nation in the future to claim that it belongs to them, since Abraham did not pay for it. We sometimes think that we have failed, but God has other plans.

When I was looking for my bashert, I travelled all over North America for shidduchim. After a while, I went to my rabbi, frustrated, and asked him, "When will I get married?" His words were "Everything you are going through will get you closer to meet your bashert." At the time, it was difficult for me to understand his words. I felt like I had failed. I even thought that maybe I wasn't meant to get married. After I met my wife and got married, I understood my teacher's message. He meant that every person must go through some failures, but these failures are necessary in order to succeed.

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik quotes a midrash that God created many worlds that he was not pleased with, and then He created this world. Rabbi Soloveitchik says God did this in order to teach us that even he could "fail." God does not want or expect perfection. Adam, as great as he was, made a mistake. Perhaps this is why men are born physically imperfect, to instil within us the notion that life is a process of trying to improve and to grow from our previous failures.

It's up to each one of us to tune in to the message God sends us. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

God may have promised Abraham that he would have land and progeny, but that revelation did not disclose the personal effort that he and Sarah would have to expend to attain those blessings.

In the Torah portion that tells us of the death of his beloved wife, we read details of Abraham's efforts to properly acquire land to bury his life mate and of the assignment – on which he dispatched his trusted house servant – to find a proper partner for Isaac.

Twice before did Abraham settle (*vayeshev*) in the Land of Promise: after the expedition to Egypt (13:12 and 18) and following the encounter with Avimelech of Gerar (20:1 and 15). Each of these previous efforts to "settle" was connected to an incident involving Sarah. Now, when Abraham will finally purchase (*koneh*) some land, it will be to bury Sarah. The Torah teaches in a subtle way that the Land of Promise is related to the women who will give birth to the children of the future.

Abraham is clearly a powerful figure, "a prince of God" (*nasi elokim*), who has displayed his strength to the leaders of Egypt and Gerar, as well as in war with the area chieftains. Yet when it comes to purchasing property, in Hebron, Abraham relies neither on Divine promises nor on human power. Instead, Abraham negotiates with Ephron and the local residents and pays full value for the property.

The Torah teaches subtly that the Land of Promise must be acquired through respectful relations and proper financial exchange. The mission of Abraham involves not only the gain of land and the birth of future children. It entails the creation of a community to "keep the way of the Eternal by doing righteousness and justice" for all who live in the mixed society in the Land of Promise. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto. Follow him at beth-tzedec.org and www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl

Rabbi Catharine Clark

Like many of us, Rebecca is a woman in a hurry. In Parshat Chayei Sarah, when Abraham's servant comes to the well to find a wife for Isaac, Rebecca hurries to lower her jar so that he may drink. When he is sated, she hurries to empty her jar and runs to refill it so that his camels may drink. Later, Rebecca runs to report to her household the arrival of this intriguing stranger.

Her rushing about in this week's parshah is for good purpose. Rebecca's whirlwind of activity at the well proves that she is a worthy partner for Isaac.

Next week, however, we will see that Rebecca's industriousness is not necessarily a virtue. In the lead-up to Jacob, rather than Esau, receiving Isaac's blessing, Rebecca hurries, but not for good purpose. Rather, Rebecca eavesdrops on Isaac telling Esau to go get him meat in order to receive his father's blessing. Rebecca repeats this story to Jacob, cooks a dish Isaac likes, takes Esau's clothes, gives them to Jacob, covers his hands and neck with fur, and puts the cooked dish into Jacob's hands.

That is a lot of activity accomplished before Esau returns from the hunt. Rebecca rushes about, full of energy, but not virtue. Her aim is deception.

The contrast between Rebecca hurrying in the two parshiyot is a reminder to us to slow down. We have a tendency to regard the efficient completion of a to-do list as the clearest indicator of good character. What we learn from the contrast between these two scenes in Rebecca's life is that we would do better to put a little less effort into crossing items off our to-do list and a lot more thought into what tasks are worthy of making the list in the first place. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ontario.

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Second season of Prisoners now on DVD

JOSEPH SERGE
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Just as season 4 of *Homeland* is hitting its stride on Super Channel, it's worth noting that season 2 of *Prisoners of War* (*Hatufim*), the Israeli series that spawned the U.S. series, is now out on DVD.

It's also worth noting that if the two shows had little in common other than their genesis in season 1, by the second season, this difference is even more pronounced.

Season 1 of *Prisoners of War* focused on the return to Israel of two Israel Defence Forces soldiers who were captured in Lebanon 17 years earlier. As season 1 progressed, we learned that a third solider in captivity with them, believed to have been killed, is likely still alive and in captivity.

Season 2 begins horrifically with a terrorist raid on an Israeli school some 23 years ago. It's the first day of school for Grade 1 student Noni, who ends up watching his father getting shot by the terrorists. This sequence is likely one of the most tense opening scenes I've ever seen.

Unfortunately, the rest of the 14 one-hour episode series doesn't hold up to this frantic pace for long and gets bogged down in a highly convoluted story and at times a plot worthy of a daytime soap opera.

There are two major plot lines. The first centres on the two prisoners, Uri and Nimrod, from the previous season, still picking up the pieces of their lives. Uri has now gotten back with his old fiancée, who had left him for his brother while he was in captivity for 17 years. Nimrod, meanwhile, has separated from his wife and two kids.

The second plot line is about Amiel, the third prisoner. We find he now seems to be free in Syria, calls himself Yussuf and has converted to Islam. He is married to an iman's daughter and is a rising star in a terrorist cell in Lebanon, the same organization that brutally tortured him and his two comrades years ago. This is by far the more intriguing of the two stories, but it does get confusing.

Acting upon information provided by Nimrod and Uri, Israeli intelligence believes Amiel is alive and likely now working for a notorious terrorist group. Complicating things is the existence of another off-the-books intelligence outfit who have always known he is alive and is secretly working on his extraction. Or are they?

The question is, has Amiel been turned by the terrorists, or is he a double agent working for Israel? Does this rogue intelligence outfit want to extract Amiel or execute him? Is Amiel planning the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, or is this all part of the plan conceived by the rogue intelligence unit? How do the chief terrorist's son's math books fit into the picture? And what is this Operation Judah? The viewer is left in doubt until the very end.

The middle of this season flips back and forth between the slower, soapy side (Nimrod's wife starts dating her daughter's psychiatrist, Uri may have cancer) and the faster paced Amiel plot. The series also flips back and forth between the present and flashbacks to the time when the three of them were still in captivity. We learn what their unit was doing in Lebanon at the time of their capture and how it all ties into the main plot and the mysterious Operation Judah.

The characters in *Prisoners of War* are a lot more developed than their counterparts in *Homeland*, but the Israeli series lacks the sleekness and high-paced tension of the American version. However, in the last few episodes, as it begins to all come together, *Prisoners of War* can be as nail-biting as anything else on TV.

"A lot of things are unclear," one of the characters says in the final episode of this psychological drama. But if you stick with it, the payoff is worth it at the end. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 13, 2014

Julius Grey: lawyer with a social conscience

ELIAS LEVY
elevy@thecjn.ca

Born in Wroclaw, Poland, in 1948 to a non-practising Jewish family, Julius Grey immigrated to Quebec with his parents in 1957.

At age nine, he was enrolled in an anglophone Protestant school, where his parents, who spoke French, were required to register him at the time. In Quebec, non-Catholics could not attend a French school. Grey decided then that when he was an adult, he would defend the weakest and most disadvantaged people.

"I was completely lost in that school, living an absolutely nightmare at finding myself in a class where I didn't know what was happening. I felt lost and very vulnerable. That feeling of confusion would radically change the course of my life, and I swore to myself that all my life I would defend – vigorously and with conviction – the most disadvantaged and marginalized in our society," he said in an interview.

It's a promise he has largely kept. This socially involved, renowned lawyer – he received law degrees from McGill University, where he taught for 15 years, and also studied at Oxford University – has been a tireless defender of individual freedom and social justice, and has participated with gusto in the heated discussions about Quebec and Canada over the last 50 years fundamental, often bitter debates about language, freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Grey, who in 2004 received the prestigious Quebec Bar Medal, has won several key victories before the Supreme Court of Canada.

His memorable appeals in defence of causes involving freedom of religion – notably the wearing of a kirpan in the Gurbaj Singh Multani case in 2006, and having an eruv and a sukkah in the Moïse Amselem case in 2004 – are now part of Canadian jurisprudence history.

In a book of interviews with Quebec academic and political pundit Geneviève Nootens, published recently in French, Julius Grey discusses some of his important fights in Quebec and Canadian courts and gives his views on hot topics in the news, including religious issues, freedom of speech, gaps in the Canadian judicial system and the future of democracy. He is also writing his memoirs in English, to be published next year.

What motivated you to strongly defend causes where freedom of religion was being challenged before the highest courts of Quebec and Canada?

In all the cases concerning religion that I've defended before the courts, my position has always been the same: for me, what has to prevail is not freedom of religion, but free will, the right of an individual to say "no." My appeal in defending young Multani against the Marguerite-Bourgeoys School Board was poorly understood by the Sikhs. They were absolutely convinced that I was defending their right to be different. That was not at all the case. I was defending the right of every individual to be different, not the right of any specific group. In the Multani case, for me, the ultimate goal was to permit the young Sikh to wear his kirpan to public school.

Julius Grey

> *I believe that Canadian multiculturalism is a failure because it's impossible to have social harmony if groups keep their own distinct characteristics from one generation to the next and don't intermingle*

In the Amselem case, were you afraid that the appeal before the Supreme Court could at times turn into a debate purely about religious interpretations?

The lawyers for the Sanctuaire du Mont-Royal who defended the position of the owners of the condominium building where Amselem lived – the owners were opposed to his construction of a sukkah on the balcony of his home – took the clear-sighted initiative of soliciting the point of view of an eminent rabbinic and academic authority, Rabbi Barry Levy, dean of the faculty of religious studies at McGill. He produced a report saying it isn't necessary to have a separate sukkah in order to be a good Jew. Rabbi Levy said the Amselem case was based on a poor interpretation of the Talmud. The lawyers for the Sanctuaire's position was that freedom of religion had to be defended only when it was necessary for the religion.

You brilliantly upheld the opposite before the Supreme Court of Canada and won by a very close margin: five against four.

For me, it wasn't a question of starting a debate with an academic as knowledgeable as Rabbi Levy on what the Jewish religion says or does not say about a sukkah. I simply explained to the judges that the position of Judaism on the sukkah, in my opinion, had no relevance from the moment Mr. Amselem wanted to build a sukkah on the terrace of his home and sincerely believed in all conscience that he had an obligation to do so. What's fundamental and takes priority in my eyes is what the individual believes.

Why are you such a fierce opponent of Canadian multiculturalism?

I believe that Canadian multiculturalism is a failure, because it's impossible to have social harmony if groups keep their own distinct characteristics from one generation to the next and don't intermingle. The multiculturalism model favours the crumbling of society. Every individual lives in his own space. He may respect the other, but he refuses to associate with him.

Interculturalism as proposed by the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on religion-based accommodation in Quebec seems to you a better model than multiculturalism. Yet, some people consider it very unrealistic.

The interculturalism proposed by Bouchard-Taylor is a very good idea. That model allows people to have their own culture while sharing, if they so desire obviously, a common culture... I think that the intercultural Quebec model, based on the idea of a common culture and a mix of cultures, is a better model for a society than what former Progressive Conservative prime minister Joe Clark called the "community of communities."

The Quebec charter of values proposed by Pauline Marois' Parti Québécois government offended you a lot.

That Quebec charter of values, which was outrageously mean-spirited and petty, was aimed above all at Muslims. If the kirpan and the kippah were also banned from public spaces, it was an indirect result... I was offended by that very unhealthy debate, because I told myself I was naive enough to believe that ethnic nationalism was finished in Quebec. But in the end, the people of Quebec had the last word: a great majority rejected the identity charter.

Does the upsurge of anti-Semitism in western countries, including Canada, bother you?

I don't think there is any anti-Semitism in modern society. There are certainly anti-Semites in every country in the world, just as there are people who hate francophones or anglophones. During the Quebec referendum of 1995, I saw despicable graffiti against anglophones as well as against francophones. Ask yourself this question: does a Jewish child born in Montreal today have less chance of success than an anglophone or francophone Montrealer who is not Jewish? Think about it

For you, freedom of speech should never be limited. Does this position also apply to those who express hatred or anti-Semitism?

For me, freedom of speech is a basic value. We must have a really important reason to limit it. I have always thought that when it comes to speech, any limits we set should be related to true harm. We must pay careful attention with the argument that says speech can really cause harm. For example, if someone repeatedly expresses hate messages advocating violence against members of a minority and inciting people to attack them, that's a very serious case that leads to real harm. Damage is serious when it is concrete and documented. I think that if someone treats a person as if he were a "dirty black" or a "dirty Jew," there is real harm in it. But not all hate speech necessarily causes harm. That's why I think we must let people speak freely. We are deluding ourselves if we believe that because we forbid something, it will disappear like magic from people's minds. ■

Translated from the French by Carolan Halpern.

The Jews of jihad

Backstory

EROL ARAF

By the time the roaring Guns of August finally fell silent, four great empires – Ottoman, German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian – lay buried under the smouldering ruins of World War I. More than 500,000 Jews fought and died on both sides of the war and few survived. In the Imperial Russian Army alone 350,000 Jews fought for their national colours; in the Austrian army 100,000; in the German army about 40,000; and in the British and French forces 50,000.

One story that has never been properly told deals with Turkish Jews who were fiercely loyal to the Ottoman Empire and served gallantly in the shadow of the Crescent from Gallipoli to the Sinai. They, like their Muslim compatriots, took up arms when Sultan Mehmet V formally declared jihad against the Allies on Nov. 11, 1914. This was the last genuine proclamation of Holy War in history by the reigning Caliph: Viceroy to Allah.

The story of the Jews of jihad is riveting. Few know that the most famous Jew serving in the Ottoman Army was none other than Moshe Sharett, who became the second prime minister of Israel. When the war broke out, he was studying law at Istanbul University, the same faculty of law where both Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and David Ben-Gurion had attended. He enlisted and served as a first lieutenant in the Ottoman Army as an interpreter.

Many others fell in battle, including prominent Jewish physicians. Maj. Yitzhak Acubel and captains Albert Kohen, Yzidor Palom, Albert Menae, Pepo Akyote, David Feder and Behar Alfandari were among the most respected doctors in Istanbul and Izmir.

The sacrifices of Turkish Jews were recognized by both the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic which succeeded it. Indeed, according to the book *Our Holy Dead*, published by the Turkish Defence Ministry, Pte. Istor Benajel served with the "Composed Military Aid Battalion of Adana," was wounded in Palestine and died at the Adana Military Hospital. Martyr Benajel was from Corum, a town a few hours away from Ankara. He rests in the Adana Jewish Cemetery and was buried with military honours.

> *Like their Muslim counterparts they took up arms when Sultan Mehmet V declared jihad*

The famous Jewish musicologist Abraham Zvi Idelson, the composer of the celebrated song *Hava Nagila*, served as band master in the Ottoman Army during the Great War.

On the cloak and dagger side of the war, one of the most intriguing Ottoman spies was Veterinary Capt. Vital Sturumuza from Mersin, the son of a famous Jewish family. After the war the Ottoman Empire was partitioned. When the Mersin and Cilicia Province was occupied by the French, Sturumuza was among the first to respond to Mustafa Kemal's call for national liberation and organized a local Jewish Committee of National Resistance. He was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned by the French and on one occasion he was saved by the Spanish consul general in Mersin, Hanri Gatenyon, a fellow Jew, who used his influence to have Sturumuza released.

In the archives in Istanbul, there is a faded brown photograph of Jewish Ottoman soldiers in Gallipoli praying on Yom Kippur in 1915. This extraordinary event took place because Kemal Pasha – the future Ataturk – commander-in-chief of the Ottoman forces fighting the Allies, had decreed that Jewish soldiers would observe their Day of Atonement away from the hostilities.

I wonder what must have gone through the minds of my countrymen as they recited the payer of inscription: "Who shall live and who shall die; Who by fire and who by water; Who by the sword and who by wild beasts."

The same prayer was also intoned on the other side of the blood-soaked valley of shadows by British, French, Australian and New Zealand Jews.

"Who shall live and who shall die." ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

HANA ZIMNOWITZ ז"ל

Nov 11, 1922 – Oct 24, 2014

It is difficult to lose a loved one, but comforting to know how much she was loved by everyone who knew her.

A heartfelt thank you to all who shared our grief and in so many ways joined us to bid farewell to Hana.

Gerda Frieberg and family

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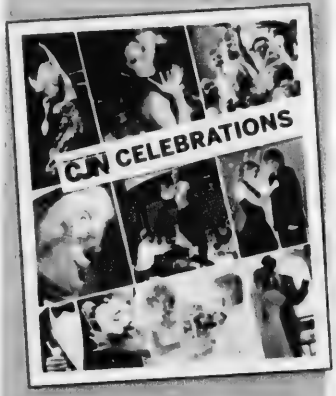
Division on the Temple Mount

Israelis debate whether it's time for new rules on Har Habayit. PAGE 8

Plus: What will Israel's next war look like? PAGE 44

FLASH90 PHOTO

Jesse Brown's moment
Meet the media upstart who broke the Jian Ghomeshi story and started a national debate.
PAGE 14



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Vancouver	4:06 p.m.	5:16 p.m.

Jewish students face campus battles

Ryseron group takes stand against anti-Semitism. PAGE 12

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Vancouverite joins fight against ISIS

Gillian Rosenberg was valedictorian at her Jewish high school. PAGE 20

Koffler orchestra takes final bow

Funding cuts mean the end for nine-year-old string ensemble.
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RECORD-BREAKING SELL-OUT HIT
★★★★
TORONTO STAR
ARCADIA
By TOM STOPPARD Directed By LEDA HOLMES
NOV 4 – DEC 14 ROYAL ALEXANDRA THEATRE

Sorry about the fascist stuff, and Mekel still gets paid

Nicki Minaj apologizes for video

Rapper Nicki Minaj apologized on Twitter for her new animated video that contains Nazi imagery. "I didn't come up w/the concept, but I'm very sorry & take full responsibility if it has offended anyone." Minaj tweeted Nov. 11 to 18.3 million followers. "I'd never condone Nazism in my art." In the video for *Only*, which has more than five million views on YouTube, a Hitler-like Minaj marches through scores of soldiers and large red banners with an insignia resembling a swastika. The Anti-Defamation League, which said it was "deeply disturbed" by the video, accepted her apology.

Hugging terrorists at McMaster

The group Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights held a "Hug a Terrorist" event at McMaster University's student centre Nov. 13. The event was based on a controversial viral video filmed in Toronto last summer and featured kids asking for hugs and holding signs reading "Hug a Terrorist." The idea was to raise awareness about civilian deaths in Gaza, particularly children, organizers told the *Hamilton Spectator*. Critics said the initiative trivialized the seriousness of international terror and was particularly ill-timed given the recent attacks in Ottawa and Quebec. SPHR said it delayed its event two weeks out of respect for the soldiers killed in those incidents. "We can't always be time sensitive," SPHR president and McMaster student Yara Shoufani said.

Rapper says she'd never condone Nazism.

Visa troubles snare Israeli NBA player

Delays in renewing his visa prevented Israeli point guard Gal Mekel from signing with the NBA's Indiana Pacers after the Dallas Mavericks released him last month. Mekel, the second Israeli to play in the NBA after Omri Casspi, had opened his second season in the league as a starter for the Mavs, but shooting woes and roster changes led the team to release the former Maccabi Haifa standout. He missed part of his rookie campaign with an injury and spent time in the NBA's Development League. But don't worry: with a guaranteed contract, he'll still be paid $1.76 million (US) this season and next. ■

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Gematria

$12 million

The amount in U.S. dollars being fundraised by the Venetian Heritage Council to renovate three of Venice's five historic synagogues and its Jewish museum in time for the 500th anniversary of the creation of the Venice Ghetto in 2016.

$20 million

The value of mortgages announced last week in a fraud case involving 14 members of a Satmar chassidic family in New York accused of lying to obtain the loans.

Quotable

When I was a camper... Israel was only about 30 years old and we were only about 30 years out of the Holocaust, so there was a different feeling about it.

— Sindi Kachuk, chair of the board of Canadian Young Judaea. See Q&A on p. 58.

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Letters to the Editor

Holding on to the Kotel

Anat Hoffman and I disagree about the interpretation of Israeli law ("Norma, I love you, but you're wrong," Nov. 13). Yet there is no disagreement on the fact that Robinson's Arch does not have any of the kedushah (holiness) of the Kotel (the Western Wall). To pray in the women's section of the Kotel is to claim our inheritance of prayer and of place. Those old stones are witness to our communal continuity, as well as to the thousands of prayers that were uttered in that space. No other location can make that claim.

Let us be clear: women too stood there and prayed for generations. We, the original Women of the Wall, have been struggling to maintain that connection both legally and practically on the ground. Anat Hoffman helped to make that presence a reality.

Nonetheless, we do not recognize anyone's right to negotiate away the place of women at the Kotel itself. Signing on to the new plaza of the Robinson's Arch is not a compromise but an agreement to end all women's presence – in a group – at the Kotel. If others wish to pray at Robinson's Arch, a famous archeological site, that is their right. We wish them well. However, we will not participate in or recognize this deal. We will not give away the Kotel to a haredi establishment that will use it for its own ends.

The Supreme Court decision of 2003 stated that the government had 12 months to fix up an appropriate location for women to pray in. Absent that condition, we are granted permission to pray at the Kotel as a group with Torah and tallit.

The Sobel decision of 2013 further clarifies that our prayer does not violate the "local custom of the place." How these decisions are applied is politics. But the law is clear. Hence, we have won our place at the Kotel and will not abandon it.

Norma Baumel Joseph
Montreal

Remembering women vets

I enjoyed the Remembrance Day features about the Jewish war veterans. But, where were the women?

My mother, Eve Daniels, served during World War II in the Canadian Women's Army Corps until the war ended. As Cpl. Eve Keller, she was near the front lines doing record-keeping for the troops.

Being in that position meant the risk of danger to her and her colleagues. There were times that the Nazis broke through and the women had to evacuate quickly so as not to get left behind by the Canadian troops.

My mother also told me about the time that the Jewish soldiers were celebrating Chanukah. A Nazi soldier had been captured and was brought to where they were. He didn't believe them when they said they were Jewish because he claimed Hitler said he got rid of all the Jews. They showed him how wrong Hitler was.

Leslie Kinrys
Toronto

Taube gets history wrong

Michael Taube ("The First Jewish Liberal-Conservative," Nov. 6) not only demeans the 60 per cent of Canadians who didn't vote for the Conservative party in 2011, referring to them as a "brood" with "tiresome left-wing fulminations," but he also exhibits a profound ignorance of elemental Canadian history.

His hero, Henry Nathan, the first Jewish MP, did not switch parties. The ruling party from 1867 to 1874, led by John A. Macdonald, was a coalition of Liberal-Conservatives (its pre-Confederation name) and Conservatives. The opposition party was the Liberals.

A key figure in British Columbia's admission to Canada, Nathan was a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was acclaimed (not appointed) in 1871 as a Liberal (not a Liberal-Conservative) and elected a year later.

When the CPR was discovered to have illegally contributed money to the Tories (the "Pacific Scandal"), Nathan naturally sided with Macdonald, did not contest his seat in 1874, and returned to his native Britain several years later.

The readers of *The CJN* would be better served if Taube would curb his rhetoric, get his facts straight and desist from creating illogical speculations about Jewish voting patterns.

Franklin Bialystok
Centre for Canadian Studies, University College, University of Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

The time had come for my wife's unveiling. My kids and I wanted a monument that honoured her memory and captured who she was. A stone of lasting beauty, so that when we visited her grave, we felt close to her. The monument counsellor at Benjamin's Landmark designed a custom stone at a price we could afford. They truly took the utmost care.

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Exercise for the Jewish soul

Shuls don't have the resources to give congregants one-on-one devotional training, but can they use daily minyans to give their spiritual athletes a challenging workout?

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Finegold: I want to follow up on what we wrote about last time regarding the work of preserving a spiritual life throughout the year. In my personal practice, I have tried to adopt a paradigm of the soul needing exercise just like the body. I have to set up "gym time" for spiritual work at regular intervals, whether that's daily tfillah or a check-in to see how I'm doing in some area of life. If I find I'm slipping, then I need to work that "soul muscle group" a little more.
What are some of the concrete steps that you take, or suggest your congregants adopt, to help with this process? Is there anything that may be unique to your denomination's perspective that you find particularly useful?

Rabbi Scheim: I like your image of a spiritual workout. In an ideal synagogue world, rabbis, cantors, and ritual directors would fill the role of personal trainers. In my admittedly limited experience in the gym, my trainer would take me from one exercise machine to another, back and forth, in the process, activating muscle groups I never knew existed. Similarly, a spiritual trainer could take one through various aspects of Jewish traditional life. Unfortunately, we don't have the resources for one-on-one training for every congregant.

Short of the full workout experience, daily minyan is a good starting point, in that it offers prayer, community, and some study in a nurturing environment. Our two daily morning minyanim are largely populated by men and women who began attending while saying *Kaddish*, and who continued to attend on a regular basis long after the *Kaddish* period had ended, because of the variety of needs, spiritual and otherwise, minyan fulfils.

Rabbi Finegold: I remember training for my first race. Every run had a very specific role in the lead-up to the big day. Even if I didn't want to run on a given day, I knew that I had to because I needed to get the miles in to be able to cross the finish line. And yet within three weeks after it was over, I had tapered off to a single run a week, barely enough to stay in shape. When I realized what was happening, I immediately signed up for another race, and found a coach (my running rebbe) to push me out of my comfort zone.

What would the next race be for people who have finished a year of *Kaddish*? They know how to pray by that point and are certainly capable of getting up early or leaving work and going straight to Minchah. But they often do not, because the obligation is no longer felt, even though it really hasn't gone away. It is understandable in the sense that they no longer have the same filial feeling of responsibility, but perhaps we can create something within the parameters of daily prayer that can push them to go another year and another after that.

What can we do with the routine of minyan to activate new spiritual muscle groups, and continue to challenge our spiritual athletes?

Rabbi Scheim: In a way, the juxtaposition of the word "race" with the word "minyan" can be problematic, because, too often, minyan is a race with the clock, the goal being to finish as quickly as possible. The age-old conflict between *keva* and *kavanah*, between fixed routine and experiential prayer, is confronted on a daily basis. When we hurry through the weekday service, because people need to be somewhere else soon, those who want to focus on the words of the siddur, sing a few more melodies and inhale the davening experience are frustrated. Likewise, when a prayer-leader sings every melody, elongates every passage and "shleps out" the service, those pressured by schedules become impatient.

The search for that illusive happy medium, where some semblance of *kavanah* can be achieved, while limiting the service to a realistic time-frame, can be truly daunting. But both will be necessary for us to convince year-long *Kaddish*-sayers to return to the minyan once the mourning period has ended. As much as our daily services have to move, time-wise, likewise, they have to move us emotionally or spiritually, even in some small way, every day. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Cut and a shave

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Outside the United Barber Shop at 199 Dundas St. W., in Toronto, sometime in either 1952 or 53 are, N. London, left, and Boris Kotzer.

SeeJN | Ottawa Havdalah

PETER WAISER PHOTO

Some 500 people from Ottawa's Jewish community came out to celebrate a community unity Havdalah service, co-sponsored by every synagogue from every denomination in the city as part of the international Shabbat Project on Oct. 25. Pictured, centre, are Marlene Wolinsky, head of school for the Ottawa Jewish Community School, and David Wolinsky, holding a Havdalah candle.

From Yoni's Desk

A challenge for federation leaders

More than 3,000 staff and volunteers from North American Jewish federations met last week just outside Washington, D.C., for the General Assembly (GA). The annual event, dubbed "the premier leadership retreat for federation volunteer leaders and professionals engaged in the business of Jewish philanthropy," offers a chance for Jewish community leaders to learn from each other, brainstorm new ways to engage Jews and discuss challenges in fundraising.

In the federation world, the GA is the event of the year, a chance to showcase its best and brightest. That's why *The CJN* asked two Canadian federation leaders, Morris Zbar, president and CEO in Toronto, and Deborah Corber, CEO in Montreal, to relate their experiences there.

The GA stressed "coming together for one another," Zbar says, even if "we all have our opinions, and... certainly don't agree on everything...

"In today's world," he writes, "do we really have a choice?"

Given the challenges facing Jewish communities worldwide, Zbar argues, "it's vital that we put aside our differences – petty or not – and focus on the one thing that truly matters, and that is the well-being of the Jewish People.

"Those of us who work day in and day out in the business of Jewish philanthropy have the ability to effect meaningful change," he concludes. "It's a responsibility we don't take lightly."

Montreal's 50-plus GA attendees experienced "a singular opportunity to connect, learn, engage, exchange and make common cause with fellow Jews who share a love of the Jewish People and a desire to ensure a bright future for us all," Corber writes.

This year's Montreal delegation "included women and men, young adults and seasoned veterans, secular and observant, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, English- and French-speaking – a representative sample of the diversity that makes Montreal such a unique Jewish community," she explains. And in that sense, the GA was "an eloquent expression of the power of community."

Whether you're a Montrealer or a Torontonian – or a Vancouverite, Calgarian or Haligonian – your Jewish life has almost assuredly included some meaningful connection to your local federation. (For me, it's the memory of floor hockey games on Sunday afternoons at the late Bathurst Jewish Community Centre.) There is an undeniable comfort in that shared relationship, and an important reminder that we are all responsible for each other.

But not everyone would paint as rosy a picture of Jewish federations as Zbar and Corber did. Some question the continued viability of the federation model for a younger generation with changing priorities, while others growl about federations' uncritical support for Israel (or complain about operational spending figures). Some simply don't feel their federation has anything to offer them. When that connection is threatened, federations must redouble their efforts to engage as many Jews in their communities as possible. In turn, alienated individuals would do well to try to set aside their differences.

"By learning and sharing together," Corber writes of the trip to Washington, "we discovered that collectively, we can accomplish great things." That's an important lesson for all of us to remember as our federation representatives begin the process of implementing what they learned at this year's GA. ■ — YONI

OBITUARY

Miriam Herman was the voice behind What's New for 32 years

Ron Csillag

To the legions of Jewish communal planners who sought to get their lecture, dinner, ceremony or other worthy occasion listed in the pages of *The CJN*, Miriam Herman was the soothing voice on the other end of the telephone. "All right," she would calmly advise before taking down the date, time, place, and other details with a red pen on canary-yellow paper. "But speak slowly. I'm a slow writer."

She may have been slow but she was thorough – and hardy. For 32 years, Herman was the face, voice and reliable tabulator behind *The CJN's* popular events listing pages, What's New.

She died Nov. 7 in Toronto. She was 92.

At its busiest, Herman's column sometimes ran three jam-packed pages. It was her job to list, chronologically, and with enough advance notice, details of every talk, class, seminar, luncheon, synagogue program, names of speakers and *machers*, and contact phone numbers of every event called in. These could number up to 100 a week, and her phone never stopped ringing. She loved to tell callers it was free of charge (but didn't much like saying she had no control over whether the paper would cover their event, though even that was delivered with grace).

She graduated from the typewriter to the computer with relative ease.

Recalled as a refined, elegant lady, immaculately attired, hair and makeup perfect, and quick with a smile and kind word, Herman was known widely by her nickname, Bubbles. The moniker was earned because she blew bubbles as a baby but could have come by virtue of an effervescent personality.

Friends, loved ones and colleagues often marvelled at how she maintained such a cheerful, optimistic demeanour given the incredible hardships she had endured. After a long and harrowing battle, her beloved daughter, Meta, died of multiple sclerosis, and she was widowed a remarkable four times.

"She continued to use the name Miriam Herman in her column, since that was the name she had when she started out [at the paper]," said her daughter, Thea Herman. "After she married Leon [Bookman], she became Bubbles Bookman – but Herman remained her pen name. And then, when she married Cyril [Rotenberg], she kept the name Bookman for legal purposes but used Rotenberg in her social life."

"Those of us who had the pleasure of working with Bubbles consider ourselves richer for the experience," Gary Laforet, the former general manager of *The CJN* for most of Herman's time at the paper, said. "She was a uniquely kind and caring lady and she will be missed."

Herman's column was "always a must read [and] reflected her love of the Jewish community," said Patricia Rucker, editor of *The CJN* from 1989 to 1994. "She wrote with accuracy and grace, and her callers knew that she cared about every event. She was a great lady, and a joy to work with."

She was born in Toronto in 1921 to Russian immigrant parents, Bessie and Isaac Hamill, a dentist who had weathered the Depression. Asked by her mother what she learned on her first day at school, the young girl replied that she learned her name was Miriam, not Bubbles.

After attending Oakwood Collegiate in Toronto with a group of Jewish girls who remained good friends for the rest of their lives, Herman decided to go to nursing school in New Jersey instead of university

Miriam Herman

with her friends. "She told me it was her one act of rebellion," her daughter said. "She always regretted the fact that she did not have a university education."

She worked as a student nurse during World War II and married immediately after graduation, at age 22, to Edward Braun, a doctor.

Although she never worked as a nurse, "I recall that she made great hospital corners on the bed and she had little tricks to make my sister and me more comfortable when we were home sick from school," her daughter said.

The coupled moved to St. Louis, Mo. where daughter Meta was born. But a few years later, Braun died of a heart attack while shovelling snow. Herman was a widow in her 20s with a young child.

She moved back with her parents in Toronto. A few years later, she met Louis Herman on a blind date. The couple spent 20 happy years together, and had a daughter, Thea. But he too died of a heart attack when Miriam was 47. That same year, Meta was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and her mother began devoting two days a week to her, an arrangement that would last for 40 years.

"To add to my mother's difficulties, she had a 17-year-old in full-fledged rebellion mode on her hands," said Thea. "I was angry over the death of my father and took it out on her."

Fortunately, Herman had an outlet: She became president of Holy Blossom Temple's sisterhood, a two-year post in which she learned a lot about community machinations.

But at age 50, she went job hunting and landed at *The CJN* in 1971, the year new owners took over the paper, and she began compiling What's New.

"Many people said it was the first thing they read when they opened up the paper," related her daughter. "It was the perfect job for someone with all her contacts in the community, her impeccable social skills, tact and diplomacy."

A few years later, she married Leon Bookman and they shared 20 years together before he died in 1998.

Three years after that, Herman went on to marry Cyril Rotenberg. She was 79, he was 81 and they had known each other since they were young children. When Rotenberg fell ill and died, Herman was widowed a fourth time.

But by then, Alzheimer's had her in its grip and the disease spared her the grief she would have otherwise suffered. The same was true when Meta died several years after that.

"My mother had a lot of curve balls thrown her way," her daughter understated, "but she met each one of them with strength, courage and a smile on her face. She always moved forward, not backward."

Herman is survived by her sister, Ruth Fremes, daughter Thea, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. ■

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Religious Israelis divided on Temple Mount

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
JERUSALEM

Following renewed violence, the Temple Mount has become part of Israel's reality once again. Some religious Jews are vocally reclaiming their right to pray there, while others refrain from going up – for religious, not political reasons.

"My knowledge of the place was... vague and foggy," says Varda Meyers Epstein, who has lived in Israel for three decades. "As if it were a historical place rather than a real place. It didn't occur to me what the symbolism of planting a mosque there meant."

The Temple Mount is the biblical site of the binding of Isaac, Jacob's dream, and the threshing floor bought by King David on which his son Solomon built the First Temple itself.

"It may be shocking to a lot of people," says Batya Medad, an olah of over 40 years, "but in all honesty, the Kotel [Western Wall] is of extremely low holiness in comparison. The Western Wall," she explains, "is a much later expansion of the Temple Mount." It only became a place of prayer in the last few centuries. "Until then, Jews were going up to the Temple Mount."

To Muslims, the Temple Mount is revered as the location of the binding of Ishmael and Mohammed's ascent to heaven. Today, two Muslim landmarks stand on its 37 acres. The iconic golden Dome of the Rock and the lower grey dome of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

When it was recaptured from Jordan in 1967, Moshe Dayan, a secular kibbutznik, saw Jews venerating the Temple Mount and reputedly sneered, "What is this, the Vatican?" He handed control over to Muslim religious authorities, and a law was enacted forbidding Jews from praying there.

But Jews have been returning in the last few years, at least until Oct. 29, when a Palestinian Arab terrorist shot and wounded Yehuda Glick, an American-born rabbi and Temple Mount advocate.

Medad, a journalist and blogger, visited the Temple Mount for the first time this summer with a group of religious women led by Glick and Rabbi Yosef Elbaum, another prominent advocate.

She was shocked by inequalities between religious Jews and other visitors, including lengthy delays before her group was searched and allowed to enter. She called the restriction of Jews on the Temple Mount "the epitome of hypocrisy."

Protesters are dragged away from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. FLASH 90 PHOTO

She also says that the law against prayer on the Mount is not right.

Many defy the law. "If one is caught moving one's lips in a fashion that could look like prayer, you're considered to be breaking the law," says Medad. "My friend and neighbour who led the group was very careful about saying prayers, and words from Psalms, as if she was having a conversation."

Following recent violence, Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, Israel's chief Sephardi rabbi, has called on Jews to avoid the area.

His statement has spurred a backlash. "The idea that because the Arabs are being violent, we must desist from going to our holiest spot," Medad said, "doesn't make any sense."

Elka Saadon, a Montrealer who has lived near Haifa for 17 years, is confused by media reports. "I have mixed feelings; on one side, it's really important to us, more than the Kotel. But on the other side," Saadon said, "you don't want to start another war over it. They say in the news that it's because [Glick's group] went up, they brought a lot of people; that's what incited the whole thing. I have no idea."

Saadon's 18-year-old son went up with Yehuda Glick before the shooting. Though she was happy he went, she says, "I would find it too dangerous to go there myself." Saadon feels more strongly now. "We have no idea why the Arabs want it so badly," she says, "and why we can't visit there."

Jews outside of Israel are too passive; she says. They say, "Why make trouble? Keep the Temple Mount for the Arabs. We have the Wall; it should be enough."

Epstein, a blogger, believes in the Jewish right to control the area. But she wouldn't go up herself, not because of incitement, but for religious reasons.

"Since we don't know the exact location of the [Holy of Holies], it's better not to go up there, since one might end up walking in this spot, which is forbidden for all except the [High Priest]."

Although rabbis have created maps of permitted areas, other problems remain. "One must not wear leather shoes and one has to immerse in a ritual bath. It's complicated." Disregarding these details demeans the holy site.

Nevertheless, Epstein's views have shifted. She sees people like " Glick, [and MKs] Moshe Feiglin, Shuli Moalem, and Tzipi Hotovely as absolutely heroic for ascending the Mount."

Like Epstein, former Torontonian Danny Hershtal, a political analyst and former Knesset candidate, would never go up himself, for halachic reasons. However, he says, "I don't oppose it for those given rabbinic approval."

He mentions the 1920 riots which happened because Jews wanted to pray at the Kotel. "We can't simply constrain ourselves to Muslim sensibilities, because they could be endless."

While Arabs throw stones and the world urges Israelis to concede, Dayan is also commonly vilified in religious circles for giving up this precious site.

"This is the biggest sin of my generation," says Epstein. She will never understand how anyone allowed Dayan to do such a terrible thing. " If the cries against his action were loud, they weren't loud enough."

"It's an enormous piece of land," agrees Medad, "which unfortunately, the Israeli government has allowed the Jordanians and the Muslim Waqf to administer, rather than giving it the holiness it deserves." She pauses before adding, "We have thrown away our responsibility."■

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Another take on The Death of Klinghoffer

Charles Heller

The purpose of music is to help us relate to other people, and the singing voice, especially, brings us closer to each other. This is the basic premise of opera: to tell a story and help us sympathize with others, or at least understand what is going through their mind.

Over the years, different composers have concentrated on different aspects of this project. Donizetti and Handel focused on the human voice, Puccini focused on jolting us with shocking stories, while Wagner thought in terms of Hollywood blockbusters long before they existed. Now along comes John Adams, upsetting us all by turning newspaper headlines into song.

His opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, is ending a run at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where it has attracted considerable attention due to its subject matter. *The Death of Klinghoffer* deals with the Palestinian terrorist attack on the cruise ship Achille Lauro in 1985, in which Leon Klinghoffer, a wheelchair-confined American Jew, was killed and thrown overboard.

Many newspapers, including *The CJN*, have reprinted Klinghoffer's daughters' objections to this work (their essay also appeared in the printed program for the opera). But many did not at all feel, as the Klinghoffers felt, that the opera mistreated Leon Klinghoffer. *The Aria of the Falling Body*, sung at his death, far from deserving the ridicule it has attracted (often from people who have not heard it), is in fact a dignified *Kaddish* and is followed by a moving soliloquy by his wife Marilyn, with which the opera ends.

There is indeed a problem with the opera. The libretto was written by Alice Goodman, who cannot seem to accept that Jews are entitled to live in their own land. But Goodman's personal beliefs do not surface in the opera. Some commentators have objected to a presumed "moral equivalence" in the opera – that is, its portrayal of terrorists as worthy of equal consideration to Jewish victims. But the opera does not provoke such a response at all – the text is too opaque to be regarded as giving any of the protagonists an intelligible "argument for discussion."

It was certainly an intense experience to see such a Jewish work performed, where the audience laughs when Marilyn Klinghoffer refers to the initial hijacking as "*meshugass*." (The Met has certainly come a long way from its early days, when it only with difficulty allowed the first Jew onto its board, an experience summarized by his remark: "A kike is a Jewish gentleman who has just left the room.")

The music critic at the London *Jewish Chronicle* found nothing to object to in *The Death of Klinghoffer*, except that he found it boring. That's not at all how I would describe Adams' colourful rhythms and orchestration. This work is not "operatic" – that conventional style which the original director, Peter Sellars, described pejoratively as "nice music for nice people" – although it certainly requires good singers. Many of the myriad commentators have half-heartedly defended *The Death of Klinghoffer* on the grounds that art is meant to provoke us. I think that Handel or Mozart would agree with this argument, but only up to a point. They thought that art was primarily meant to console us. Sellars himself has emphasized the role of art, and opera in particular, to heal.

This work is not what you might think of as "opera." It is more a sombre commemoration of a tragedy with refined music. It has a hyper-verbose text – the classic librettists of the past would tear their hair (or wigs) out if they heard it – that is almost opaque and monumental.

Is *The Death of Klinghoffer* worth seeing? Certainly, if you are responsive to music and the expressive powers of a great contemporary composer. ■

Charles Heller is an associate member of the Canadian Music Centre, and the award-winning author of What To Listen For in Jewish Music.

Day schools across the denominations

Daniel Held

After the Avi Chai Foundation released its fourth census of Jewish day schools in the Unites States at the end of October, media headlines trumpeted the same line "day school enrolment is up by 12 per cent."

Twelve percent growth is a phenomenal feat. Notwithstanding economic pressures, a shrinking cohort of Jewish school-aged children, increasing intermarriage and a general distancing from traditional forms of Jewish affiliation including synagogue membership and contributions to legacy agencies, day school enrolment is on the rise.

Well, not quite.

Yes, overall, enrolment across U.S. day schools is up by 12 per cent (or 26,437 students) since 2008. This growth, however, comes nearly exclusively from the chassidic and yeshiva world sectors. In this same time frame, enrolment in community schools dropped by two per cent, in modern Orthodox by seven per cent, in Reform schools by 19 per cent, and in Solomon Schechter (Conservative) schools by 27 per cent.

In 1998, only 20 per cent of all students enrolled in Jewish day schools in the United States were enrolled in non-Orthodox schools. By 2013, that number had dropped to 13 per cent. Professors Jack Wertheimer and Steven M. Cohen, in an article marking one year since the release of the infamous Pew Portrait of Jewish Americans, lament the "tragic [fact] that day schools at every level have become largely the preserve of Orthodox Jews, with only small percentages of others choosing an immersive Jewish education for their children."

Here in Toronto, the numbers look very different. In 1998, 58 per cent of all students enrolled in Jewish day schools in Toronto were enrolled in non-Orthodox schools. By 2013, that number had dropped to 54 per cent – a far cry from the American scene.

There is plenty to celebrate in Toronto's non-Orthodox day schools, but before breaking open the Manischewitz, it's worth a closer look at the numbers.

Between 1998 and 2013 enrolment in non-Orthodox schools in the U.S. dropped by eight per cent. In Toronto the drop was seven per cent. The drop in enrolment in Toronto has been precipitated in large part by a drop in the number of Jewish school-aged children – down nine per cent between 2001 and 2011. Taking population into account, market penetration has not moved significantly.

Now for the Manischewitz.

Retention is one of the success stories of Toronto schools. The Avi Chai census demonstrates clear drops in enrolment in American schools between grades 5 and 6 – when students transition into middle school – and grades 8 and 9 – the transition into high school. Not so in Toronto. A concerted effort on the part of school leadership has mitigated these natural points of attrition, ensuring high retention rates.

A second success is perceived value. Parents in Toronto are not concerned that sending their children to Jewish day school will negatively impact their future options. Quite the opposite. Day schools open doors.

A third success is choice. Unlike some communities where there are but one or two day schools, we benefit from choice – in religious philosophy, approach to pedagogy, size and location. This choice allows parents to ensure the right fit between school and child.

With enrolment in non-Orthodox day schools there is a lot at stake. A strong community needs strong day schools. These schools produce Jews with deep knowledge, strong identities, and the skills necessary to lead our community. A recent study of young communal leaders demonstrates that a disproportionate number are day school graduates.

Trends in U.S. enrolment do not bode well for the future of a diverse and committed Jewish community and further reinforce the factors leading to the Pew findings.

For us, the data should serve both as an opportunity to pat ourselves on the back and then, quickly, a reminder to redouble our efforts to build a strong, sustainable and affordable day school system for the whole community. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

I am not a 'bed'!

Jean M. Gerber

Al tashlichayni b'et ziknah: Cast me not away when I am old.

We recite this mantra in shul. For years, it had only a faint echo of meaning for me. My parents and relatives aging and dying, my own image in the mirror slowly changing – these were natural events, but surely they had nothing to do with *getting old*.

To whom are we speaking when we ask that we not be forgotten in our old age? For years, I thought it was addressed to God, but now I think it is addressed to the society around us.

To society I will eventually become a "bed." I'd say over my dead body, but that is where it will lead.

Here is a phrase my children hate: *when I was growing up* (groan), my two widowed grandmothers lived with us. One was demented by stroke. In addition to her full-time job, my mother looked after her, along with my help as a reluctant teen. The other was not so frail, but still not a well woman. We never thought of doing anything else than having them live with us.

At my recent 50th reunion with Peace Corps pals, we realized that we have arrived at the stage where young women give us seats on buses, no one asks for identification when we get seniors' passes at the movies, and no one questions our discounts on seniors' Thursdays at Shoppers.

What care can we, and boomers hot on our heels, expect? Governments have created, or helped to create, a jungle of services for the elderly – most of which are good, none sufficient, and each one living in its own little silo

By 2021, *one-quarter* of our population will be over the age of 65. Surely the Jewish community's demographic will not be far behind. While many of us still live independent, healthy lives, older seniors are already feeling the need of more – and better co-ordinated – services than are currently available.

Today, a family who has one or two elders in need of outside support – besides what the family can provide – has to manage a cacophony of agencies. There is no central place where all the various offerings can be co-ordinated. As a result, you get a few hours a day or week of home care from the government, supplemented with what you can afford privately, and the family picks up the rest. Few are able to fund 24-hour care for parents or siblings who need it.

And there will only be more of us who, when they reach the wards of a hospital, become "beds." Or, even worse, "bed-blockers."

Government services are not keeping up, or are sporadically administered and poorly co-ordinated. The Jewish community currently tries to provide, but it's daunting for any agency.

I talked with a community worker about the issue. "What we need," she told me, "given the unco-ordinated service menu among government and private home-care agencies, is someone to navigate a senior through the forest." A ship captain for the aged.

In the *Globe and Mail* on Sept. 16, Andre Picard wrote in support of home care: "Only four per cent of health-care spending goes into home care… If we want to encourage people to live in the community [read not in a hospital bed], we have to build senior-friendly cities with better public transit, affordable housing, grocery stores that deliver… If we don't provide adequate and affordable home care, a lot of people are going to end up in institutions, at much greater financial and emotional cost."

Of course, home-based elder care is only one part of the issue. Canada is spending billions on "homeland security" and ISIS. How about just one of those billions being put into a national plan for elder care? How are we – the larger community and the Jewish organized community – allocating resources to provide the same enthusiastic support of our elders? ■

The unfortunate reality of profiling

Uri Dromi

Recently, I hosted at the Jerusalem Press Club a group of students from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in Chicago. They came to learn first-hand about the complexities of covering Israel and the Middle East. With the growing hostility toward Israel on campuses all over North America, we went out of our way to prepare for these future journalists the best program possible, which would send them home enriched and better educated about the situation here.

One of the participants was a Palestinian-American female, wearing a hijab. Sensing possible problems, I contacted security at Ben-Gurion Airport and vouched for her. Alas, it didn't help. The first thing these young people encountered upon arrival was their hijab-wearing friend being pulled aside and interrogated for two hours.

Trying to avoid more such embarrassments later, I asked security at the Foreign Ministry (where I had better connections) not to single her out when the group entered the ministry, but rather to pick some people, including her, as if at random, for further inspection. The trick didn't work. In her blog she wrote: "Because of my hijab I became suspect and was discriminated against."

To discriminate against people just because of their religion or the way they look or dress is the last thing Jews should be supporting. However, the security personnel in Israel didn't pick on the Muslim student from Chicago arbitrarily. There is an onslaught on Jews and Christians today, being carried out by militant Islamists, and when attacked, Jews and Christians have the right to defend themselves.

ISIS fighters are easy to identify, with their beards, machine guns, black flags and Toyota trucks. On the other hand, terrorists disguised as airplane passengers or passers-by pose a difficult challenge. I wish there was a device that would identify them, perhaps by monitoring the sinister energy they radiate (if Israeli high-tech mavericks invent such a thing, remember where you read about it first). In the meantime, unfortunately, profiling is sometimes the lesser evil.

Being a woman doesn't necessarily help. Security people in Israel remember Wafa al Bass, a 21-year-old Gazan who in 2005 befriended Israeli guards at the Erez checkpoint. She travelled several times on a special permit from Gaza to Be'er Sheva, where she had been treated at the Soroka Hospital. For some reason, one time the guards became suspicious and discovered that under her traditional black robes she had strapped a 22-pound bomb to her leg. She was sent to prison, but released in the Gilad Schalit prisoner swap. To the Palestinian schoolchildren who came to greet her upon her release, this pious woman said: "I hope you will walk the same path we took and, God willing, we will see some of you as martyrs."

This feeling of an elusive enemy within poisons even the most liberal minds. At the Touro Restaurant at the Jerusalem Press Club, most of the sous-chefs and the kitchen workers are Palestinian. We love them and treat them as equals. Until at the Begin Heritage Center next door, a Palestinian cook pulls a gun and shot Israeli activist Yehuda Glick. Then, against everything we believe in, we start becoming suspicious.

When will all this end? When Islam overcomes this militant phase and retreats from the battlefields of the jihad back into the mosques. That, however, might take some time. In the meantime, my heart goes out to this Palestinian-American student, whose only sin was that she was wearing a hijab and now has bad memories from her first trip to Israel.

I know what I have to do. The next time I expect a Muslim guest, I'll try harder. There must be a way to walk the thin line between securing our lives and not hurting the feelings of innocent people. This is a calculated risk worth taking. ■

Uri Dromi is director general of the Jerusalem Press Club.

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Ryerson Students' Union passes anti-Semitism motion

SHERI SHEFA
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A motion that calls on the Ryerson Students' Union (RSU) to oppose anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, and to publish an annual report detailing racist incidents on campus was passed Nov. 12 at the RSU fall general meeting.

The motion, titled "No Anti-Semitism on Campus," was put forward in response to a motion that the RSU passed last April endorsing the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel.

Adir Krafman, Hillel of Greater Toronto's co-ordinator for advocacy in the GTA, explained that although the BDS motion that RSU passed in April had no bearing on the way the university administration operates, students on campus were still experiencing "rising anti-Israel sentiment."

Any Ryerson student is eligible to vote at the twice-yearly RSU general meetings. The number of students who voted on the anti-Semitism motion was not available at *The CJN*'s deadline.

The Nov. 12 motion, which was drafted by Hadas Hait, a Hillel Israel Engagement intern and the president of a Ryerson student group called Students Supporting Israel, calls on the RSU to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

"This includes, but is not limited to equating Zionism with Nazism and claiming that 'History is repeating itself' with regards to the Nazi Holocaust and the State of Israel," the motion states.

Adir Krafman

"We all know that it is not criticism of Israel, it is a form of anti-Semitism that makes our students feel uncomfortable," said Meryle Kates, the executive director of Stand With Us, a non-profit organization that works with students to help them advocate affectively for Israel.

"Students shouldn't have to be concerned about defending who they are or defending a country in classrooms and on campus in general," Kates added.

"This motion was brought forward by many students involved with Hillel and Students Supporting Israel, and Stand With Us gave them talking points and worked with them in advance to try to take this motion and make the campus less divisive and angry and hateful."

> *Students shouldn't have to be concerned about defending who they are or defending a country in classrooms and on campus.*
>
> **MERYLE KATES**
> STAND WITH US

Perhaps most important was that the motion called on the RSU to work directly with Jewish students on campus to fight anti-Semitism and to publish an annual report detailing all incidents of racism on campus and the actions taken by the RSU and university administration.

In a statement released by Hillel, Hait said, "Jewish students had expressed to me their concerns about rising anti-Semitism on campus. I wanted to draft a motion to create a report that would track and help prevent incidents of racism in the future."

Krafman explained that the idea behind the report is that if a student experiences or witnesses an anti-Semitic incident, they will be able to file a complaint with the RSU.

"The report will later be used as a tool to measure tangibly the level of anti-Semitism and can be used for further action," Krafman said.

"The first part of the motion, which commits the union to work with the Jewish student community and other members to combat anti-Semitism is already being implemented, and in the following weeks, the president of the RSU will be meeting with both the president of Students Supporting Israel, Hadas Hait, as well as Hillel at Ryerson's student president, Ruchie Shainhouse, to discuss it further."

Krafman said there were students who spoke against the motion, "but they were disorganized and didn't have any real substance, and the motion was carried."

Rebecca Katzman, a Stand With Us Canada student leader who was at the meeting said, "I explained to the mediator after the meeting that there is one Jewish state. Everyone holds the Jewish state to a higher standard than any other country in the world. This is how I know that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are one."

Along with the No Anti-Semitism on Campus motion, another motion that called on the RSU to revive its "No Islamophobia No Anti-Semitism No Racism Campaign" passed unanimously. ■

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Web reporter broke Ghomeshi story, but his rabble-rousing goes way back

PAUL LUNGEN
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Jesse Brown has always had a bit of a problem with authority.

Back when he was a youngster, he was politely asked to leave Leo Baeck Day School. As it happens, his aunt was the principal at the time.

At Northern Secondary School, he edited the school newspaper, *Punch*, and got into trouble when it published student report cards rating the teachers. The incident, which almost got him expelled, was picked up by the local media and Brown, all of 18, was asked by CBC to debate the school principal on the air.

It was his first experience with the media and the kind of controversy it can provoke. "I saw what it means to take a stand for free expression," he said.

Today, at 37, he's the successful entrepreneur behind the increasingly popular website *Canadaland*. An accomplished journalist, he's broken some big stories in the 13 months since he launched the website/podcast. But the one that has really taken off and shows no signs of abating is the Jian Ghomeshi scandal at the CBC, which involve allegations of sexual harassment and violence against the radio host.

Ironically, Brown worked for a time at the CBC. He's also written for *Saturday Night* magazine and has had a number of freelance jobs as well.

Last March he received an email from an unnamed woman relating her experiences while in Ghomeshi's company. Further investigation showed there were other women with similar stories.

Brown felt the allegations were credible and newsworthy, but he was worried he didn't have the financial clout and credibility to publish them on his own.

On the advice of lawyers, Brown took the story to the *Toronto Star*, where he could benefit from the paper's editorial advice, legal support and credibility to give the story the weight it deserved.

The revelations have rocked the CBC and have led to the termination of the popular host of the radio show, *Q*.

One story has led to another, and *Canadaland* continues to break stories about the case. "I've never had a crazier time in my life," Brown said.

Fired CBC host Jian Ghomeshi

Canadaland founder Jesse Brown

Whether the Ghomeishi story is the most important one advanced by *Canadaland* is debatable, he acknowledges. Around the same time in October that the Ghomeishi story broke, he carried an interview with American journalist Glen Greenwald on the prevalence of government surveillance in Canada.

Other important items he's covered include the speaker's fee CBC anchorman Peter Mansbridge received from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, payments to the CBC from Parks Canada, which suggests a quid pro quo, as well as a story of a senior editor at the *Globe and Mail* overruling the editorial board's recommendation to endorse a minority Liberal government in Ontario and instead put its support behind Conservative Tim Hudak.

"I'm looking for interesting media stories that aren't being reported," he said.

A fan of the *Daily Show*, *On the Media*, a public affairs radio program on NPR; and *Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe*, a BBC program, Brown realized there was nothing quite like these shows in Canada. He saw a niche and a place to start "a healthy conversation" about issues related to the media.

Apparently a lot of Canadians were looking for something just like that. Today, he boasts an audience of 10,000 listeners.

Brown learned, however, that attracting that kind of interest doesn't necessarily translate into financial viability. Even with the support of an important corporate sponsor, he came to realize "you can't make it on advertising alone."

Brown made a pitch directly to his audience, asking each of his listeners to contribute $1 a month so that "*Canadaland* becomes an independent news org, a podcast network, and a daily news site."

So far, 1,442 "Patrons," responding through the Patreon website, have pledged more than $7,200 a month. The average donation is only $5.

Canadians want good journalism and they're willing to pay for it, he said.

"It's beyond my expectations," Brown said. At $10,000 a month, he figures he can grow *Canadaland* into a small media organization.

As for his audience demographics, he's found that it's slanted to male over female, young over old and Ontario residents versus other Canadians. Some lean to the left, others to the right.

Brown himself defies categorization. On some issues, he considers himself a libertarian. At other times, his views line up with those who promote social justice.

"I think that with younger Canadians, partisanship is not an acceptable paradigm," he said.

And as for his journalistic philosophy, he doesn't promise his listeners that his perspective will be free of bias.

"I don't believe in objective journalism," he said. "I do believe in transparent journalism. Tell the people where you come from."

He even finds a Jewish element in his approach. "There's something Jewish about the sense of skepticism," he believes, "not abiding the BS and asking difficult questions."

No doubt the staff at Leo Baeck would be proud. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 20, 2014

Pier 21 Holocaust exhibit remains in storage

PAUL LUNGEN
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By all accounts, the *Wheel of Conscience* is a beautiful and effective museum piece that does what it's supposed to do – remind spectators that in 1939, Canada callously turned away the MS St. Louis and its 937 passengers fleeing the Nazis.

The trouble is, the *Wheel of Conscience* only does what it's supposed to do intermittently. It has a complex design with many moving parts and requires regular maintenance and is prone to breaking down.

Designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, the son of Holocaust survivors, the *Wheel* was installed at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax in 2011 to commemorate the 254 St. Louis passengers who were eventually murdered by the Nazis after Canada refused them entry.

It has been in storage in Toronto since the summer at the shop of its fabricators, Soheil Mosun Limited, while Pier 21 undergoes a major renovation that will see it expand its premises to 90,000 square feet, said Pier 21 CEO Marie Chapman.

But even early in its life, the exhibit presented problems. Only one week after it was installed, the exhibit broke down and was sent back to Toronto for repair, Chapman said.

It has been sent back several times every year since then. A black dust forms on its gears and a burning smell arises from the exhibit, she said, adding Halifax's salt air might be a factor in the exhibit's many breakdowns.

The *Wheel*'s future is currently being debated by various stakeholders, including Pier 21 and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

The original piece was commissioned by Canadian Jewish Congress and was paid for with a $500,000 grant from the government of Canada. Congress is defunct and its successor agency, CIJA, is consulting with Pier 21 about the exhibit's future.

"There are ongoing discussions about a suitable permanent home for the piece," said CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

One of the possible new venues for the exhibit might be the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, he suggested.

The stainless steel *Wheel of Conscience*, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, has many moving parts and is apparently prone to breaking down. PIER 21 PHOTO

"It is important for the *Wheel of Conscience* to be in a place where Canadians will be able to benefit from what it was intended to do, to mark an event that is tragic and the lessons derived from that event."

Mark Freiman, former president of Congress, has been involved in discussion about the display's future.

"What is important is to ensure that the *Wheel of Conscience* is exhibited in a location where it is accessible to the public and that the government of Canada stands behind its original commitment, where the cost of upkeep will be [borne] by the government or a federal institution," Freiman said.

That does not necessarily mean the exhibit must remain in Halifax. Another venue might be appropriate, as long as it provides the opportunity to educate the public about the impact of the Holocaust and the role of immigration in the larger context of human rights, he added.

In 1939, the Canadian government, along with the governments of Cuba and the United States, refused to allow the St. Louis to land. The ship returned to Europe where its passengers were disembarked in a number of countries. It is estimated that 254 were killed in the Holocaust.

The exhibit is a polished stainless steel wheel that incorporates four inter-meshed moving gears labelled antisemitism, xenophobia, racism and hatred. ■

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Germany to award cantor its Order of Merit

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

He's been a local Jewish treasure as cantor at the Holy Blossom Temple for the past 36 years, and now Germany will be honouring Cantor Benjamin Maissner with its Order of Merit for his dedication to restoring and preserving Jewish music around the world.

On Nov. 23, Maissner, who also serves as Holy Blossom's musical director, will be presented with one of Germany's highest civilian honours by the country's consul general in Toronto, Walter Stechel, following the shul's annual general meeting.

"I don't know why I'm getting this merit for the life of me," Maissner said, humbly.

But Maissner's list of accomplishments suggests that this is a well-deserved honour.

The Israeli-born cantor graduated from the Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music in 1968 and served as cantor at a Philadelphia synagogue until he moved to Canada in 1979.

Renowned for his extensive knowledge of secular and liturgical music, and having mastered musical styles including Jewish Renaissance and contemporary Canadian, American and Israeli compositions, Maissner is also the conductor and music director of Lachan, Toronto's Jewish chamber choir.

In addition to his contribution to the art of cantorial music, Maissner has a strong connection to Germany that dates back to the 1920s: his maternal uncle served as Hanover's chief cantor from 1925 to 1935.

"Cantor Israel Alter was a... celebrity in Germany... but in 1935 when he heard about the Nuremberg Laws [Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic laws]... he took his family to South Africa," Maissner said.

"In 1925, my uncle recorded recordings, which travelled after the war from Germany to South Africa, then to the United States, then Israel. I received them and then sent them back to Germany. A professor who is the president of the European Centre for Jewish Music in Hanover... when I returned the recording of my uncle... he discovered that I'm the nephew of Israel Alter. He connected with me and invited me many times to sing in Germany."

He has since performed at a number of events commemorating the end of World War II and the liberation of concentrations camps.

Cantor Benjamin Maissner

In 2008, he and his choir, Lachan, were invited to perform at a Jewish music festival in Hanover to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

But perhaps the most significant visit to Hanover came last year, when Maissner and his family were invited by the city as official guests to mark the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht with concerts and events throughout the city.

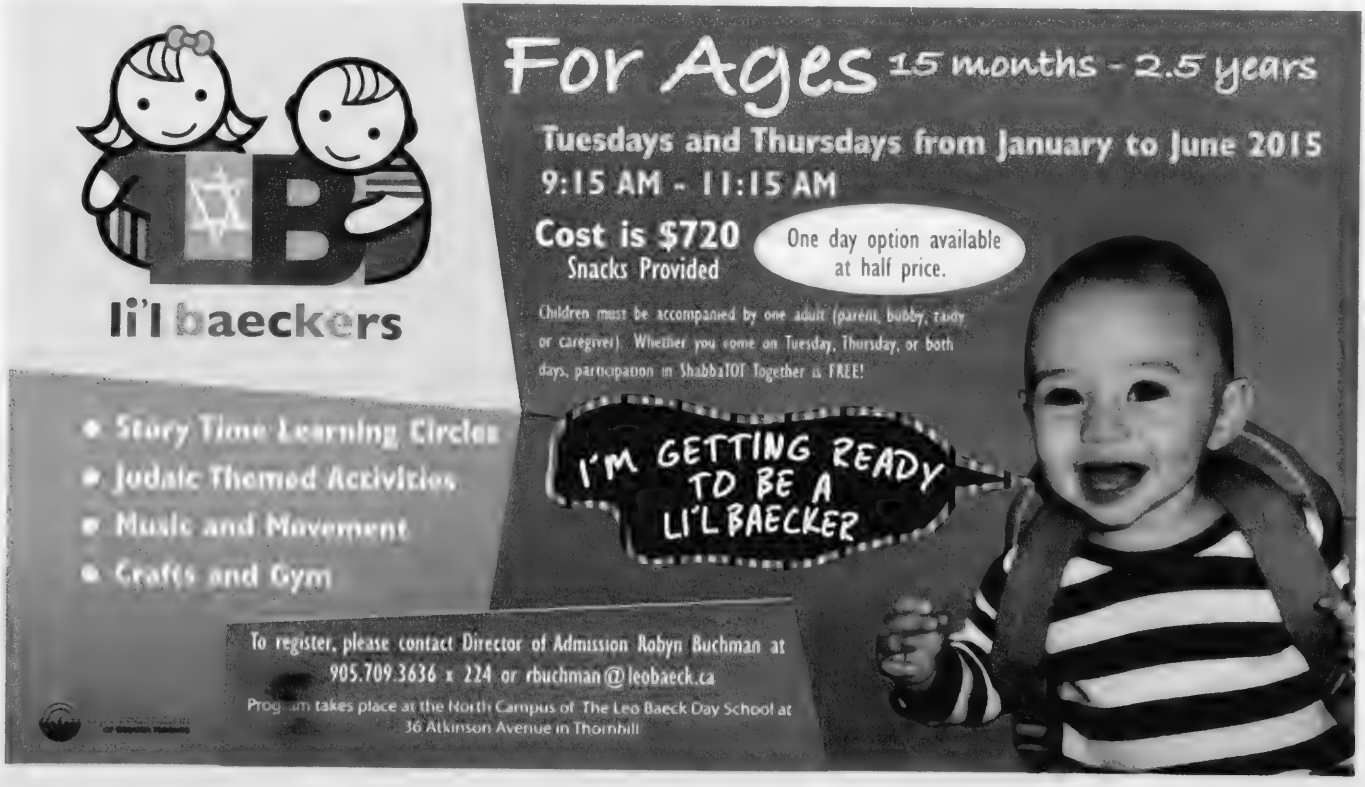
As part of the commemoration, the city placed "stumbling stones" on the pavement in front of the home where his grandparents once lived, as well as the home of his uncle, Cantor Israel Alter, and his family.

Maissner's most recent honour, being awarded Germany's Order of Merit, was set in motion by the former consul general of Germany in Toronto, Sabine Sparwasser, who became friends with Maissner after she participated in an event at Holy Blossom.

"She came to my synagogue for a concert and welcomed the cantors, because we had a convention of 300 cantors here [for 64th annual Cantors Assembly convention in 2011]... We became friends... and she initiated this," Maissner said.

"I don't think I've done anything special. When I came to Holy Blossom many, many years ago, I said that I would love to teach the values of Judaism through music, and that was my motto," he said.

"I believe in reconciliation, moving forward, rebuilding broken glass and rebuilding culture, and preserving the glorious music of Europe, which I am blessed to be doing at Holy Blossom." ■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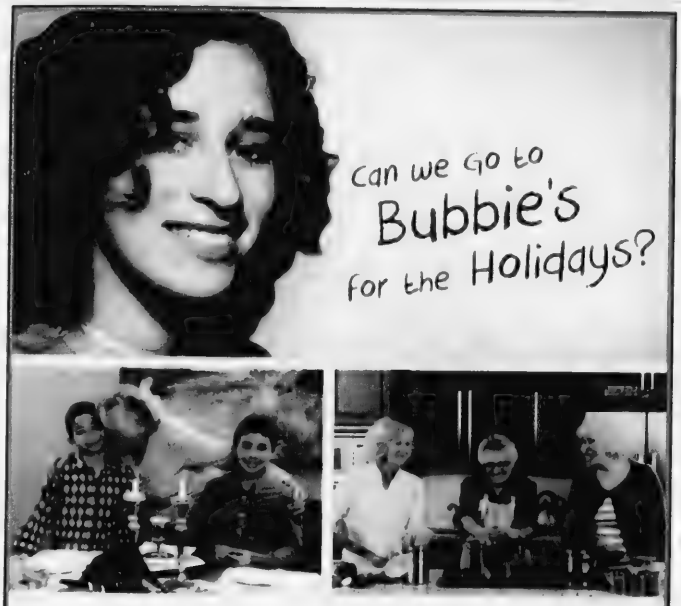

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Alleged shul bomber extradited to France

PAUL LUNGEN
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Hassan Diab YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

The Supreme Court of Canada last week declined to hear an appeal by alleged terrorist Hassan Diab, opening the door for Canadian and French authorities to extradite him to France, where he was charged Saturday in a deadly 1980 synagogue bombing.

Diab, a former sociology professor, was flown to France shortly after the high court decision, ending his six-year legal battle in Canada. Diab had been seeking to appeal lower court rulings that called for his removal.

Diab, 60, is alleged by French authorities to have been a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and involved in the 1980 terrorist attack, in which a bomb hidden in a motorcycle killed four people and injured more than 40 others. Diab, a Canadian of Lebanese descent who has dual citizenship, has denied the allegations.

Waiting in jail pending the Supreme Court's decision, Diab told the *Ottawa Citizen*, "If we don't get leave, then we will have to fight this legal battle until the end. If it's in Paris, we will do it there.

"We will never give up. I know I had nothing to do with these allegations and they know it too. This is the biggest hurt of the whole thing," he said.

Diab's battle with the Canadian legal system began in 2008, when he was arrested by a SWAT team. In 2011, an Ontario Superior Court judge upheld a French request for Diab's transfer to their jurisdiction, and in May 2014, the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld that decision.

He sought the Supreme Court's permission to appeal, but the high court turned him down. The court gave no reasons for its refusal, but the Supreme Court only hears cases on matters of public importance.

Diab's lawyer, Donald Bayne, argued in submissions to the court that it should consider the case to determine whether untested intelligence evidence should be used to extradite his client and whether such secret information violated Diab's charter right to procedural fairness.

But government lawyers said that "surrender should only be refused owing to trial fairness concerns if it is demonstrated that the criminal laws or procedures in the requesting state shock the Canadian conscience."

"Diab is now subject to immediate removal," Clarissa Lamb, spokesperson for the minister of justice and attorney general, said last week after the Supreme Court declined his request.

Lamb noted that "the judicial phase of the extradition process is a determination only that the evidence is sufficient to warrant that the person be extradited. It is not a trial. A trial will take place in the requesting state."

"The anti-Semitic bombing in 1980 was a horrific crime that killed four people and injured dozens of others. Canada condemns this cowardly act of terrorism against innocent civilians," she added.

Stéphane Schorderet, spokesperson for the French Embassy in Ottawa, said, "The embassy... wishes to reiterate that at this point in time and with regard to French law, Mr. Hassan Diab is presumed innocent. In France, he will be heard by an investigating judge in an open judicial inquiry regarding the attack that took place on Oct. 3, 1980, on rue Copernic, in Paris."

"It's tragic," Bayne told the *Citizen* shortly after hearing the top court's decision. "I was shocked. We now have the classic recipe for the wrongful conviction of a Canadian citizen."

Dozens of Diab's supporters, including many academics, released a letter last week calling on the federal justice minister "to substantially revise current Canadian extradition law. We further demand that the federal minister of justice refuse the request from France that Dr. Hassan Diab be extradited, a refusal that ought to have been rendered six years ago when this nightmare began. Canadian extradition law is a farce."

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), welcomed last week's developments.

"Like all democracies, Canada's judicial system has a number of appeal processes in place, and Mr. Diab's legal efforts have now been exhausted. We are pleased that the highest court in the land will honour the French extradition request and allow the accused to return to France so the victims may have their day in court. Mr. Diab will now be able to defend himself before France's judicial system, which is as impartial as Canada's," said CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

"We are pleased that authorities in France and Canada pursued this case even after more than 30 years since the murderous attack on the Paris synagogue. This sends an important message: that diligent, committed authorities will never cease in their pursuit of justice against terrorists on behalf of their victims," Fogel said. ■

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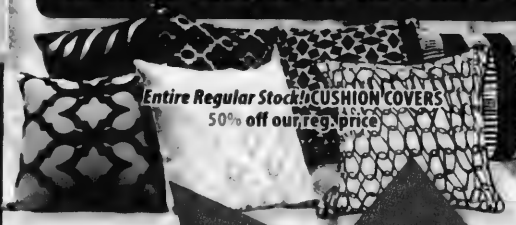

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Ex-valedictorian joins Kurdish fight against Islamic State

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

Former Vancouverite Gillian Rosenberg, 31, has become the first foreign woman to join YPG, the Kurds' dominant fighting force battling the Islamic State in northern Syria.

Rosenberg, who hails from White Rock, B.C., attended Maimonides Jewish High School in Vancouver (now called King David High School), where she was valedictorian in her graduating year, 2001.

Shoshana Burton, one of her teachers at the time, remembers her as a shy young woman.

"[She] became very passionate when she recognized opportunities to be involved with the school's annual mitzvah day where we volunteered in the community. She was compassionate and was fascinated with Israel," Burton said.

"She was a good kid, and I am really hoping that she is safe."

Rosenberg studied aviation at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), where she graduated from a 64-week Airport Operations Program in December 2003, according to Dave Pinton, spokesperson for BCIT.

"It's a course on how to run airports," he said, adding that after completing it, she enrolled in a part-time management degree program in 2004.

Gillian Rosenberg in what she says are the mountains of south Kurdistan. FACEBOOK PHOTO

She did not complete that course, he said, and the last course she took at BCIT was in January 2006.

Sometime after that, Rosenberg moved to Israel and enlisted in an Israeli army search-and-rescue unit. On her Facebook page, she lists her experience as a former instructor in that IDF unit.

In 2009, she was among 11 people arrested in a U.S. criminal case for her involvement in an international phone scam. An FBI statement from that year described it as a "phony 'lottery prize' scheme that targeted victims, mostly elderly."

At that time, Israel's NRG news site reported Rosenberg had tried in vain to join the Mossad, Israel's spy service. She was estranged from her parents and had turned to crime after landing in financial straits.

After being extradited to the United States, Rosenberg served approximately four years in prison under a plea bargain, according to court documents.

At the time she was represented by Israeli lawyer, Yahel Ben-Oved. Speaking to *Reuters*, Ben-Oved said she had no knowledge of Rosenberg joining the Kurds, though they had spoken recently.

"It is exactly the sort of thing she would do, though," Ben-Oved said.

Israel Radio interviewed Rosenberg last week by phone from Iraq, where she said she was training with Kurdish forces she had joined after contacting them on the Internet. She said she would be fighting in Syria.

"They [the Kurds] are our brothers. They are good people. They love life, a lot like us, really," said Rosenberg, who is known in Israel as Gila.

Old high school friends in Vancouver who declined to speak on the record expressed mostly shock and concern for her safety when they learned Rosenberg had joined YPG.

Another teacher who had known her in high school contacted *The Canadian Jewish News* in the hope that the Jewish community could coax her home.

On her Facebook page, Rosenberg posted photographs taken at Erbil International Airport in Iraq on Nov. 2. Another, taken Nov. 5 from a vehicle en route to Sulaymaniya, a city in Iraqi Kurdistan, she said "kinda looks like anywhere in middle America." ■

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Beth Tikvah displays books by members

Myrna Levy, left, and Anna VanDelman are co-chairs of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's authors display.

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

At the Beth Tikvah Synagogue, in a showcase at the south entrance of the building at 3080 Bayview Ave., there's a collection of books authored by members of the congregation.

"We sent out an appeal to our members for all authors to send us a photo, a bio and their books," says Anna VanDelman, who co-chairs the exhibit with Myrna Levy.

"Our idea was to celebrate Jewish Book Month at Beth Tikvah," Levy says. "To our joy and amazement, more than 20 authors replied and there are more than 30 books. It was a discovery of unknown talents."

VanDelman says they quickly filled the showcase. "We are indeed most proud of our authors. In this manner, we are able to introduce these talented people to our entire congregation."

The exhibit includes the authors' pictures and a short biography and will be on view for the community until Dec. 15.

The books are on a wide variety of topics, including children's books, memoirs, fiction, non-fiction, books on Holocaust-related themes, food and more.

Levy is a retired teacher and author of three children's books. She notes that many of the books on exhibit are by well-known authors. Among those whose works are on display are three authors of books for children: Kathy Kacer is a prolific award-winning author of books on the Holocaust for young people; Rona Arato, author of *The Last Train*, won the 2014 Norma Fleck Award of Excellence for non-fiction writing for children, and Etta Nitkin-Kaner's books on science and nature are in schools and libraries across North America.

"Then there are two award-winning translators of Yiddish, Miriam Beckerman and Vivian Felsen," Levy says. "Writing memoirs on their experiences during the Shoah, there are books by Gerda Frieberg and George Stern."

Levy notes that Bruce Waters wrote a book on astronomy, Gerald Zeidenberg, whose interest is in European history, has published three books. There are Noreen Gilletz's cookbooks, and books written by former Beth Tikvah congregation rabbis Avraham H. Feder and Wayne R. Allen.

Some of the other authors include Stuart Foxman, Morley Goldberg, Harvey Haber, Simon Kreindler, Fiona Gold Kroll, Myrna Neuringer Levy, Edward Levy, Elaine Snider (Blackstein), and Reva Stern.

VanDelman told *The CJN* she and Levy "hope that this exhibit gives others in our congregation the inspiration to tell their stories, either fictional or real."

She added that the synagogue has a writing group "with several members having been published." ■

The Beth Tikvah book exhibit can be viewed Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 416-221-3433.

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JTS honours former BJE head for 'pluralistic education'

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Seymour Epstein, a man with more than four decades of experience in the field of education and community development in Canada, Israel, Morocco and Russia, has been honoured by his alma mater, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York.

The Benjamin Botwinick Award, presented to Epstein on Nov. 18, "is an honour bestowed upon an exceptional individual who epitomizes the philosophy and practice of Jewish pluralism," JTS said in a statement. "The award recognizes outstanding leadership and commitment to furthering interdenominational understanding and co-operation within Judaism."

Epstein, who called the honour "a wonderful thing," said he's taken by the idea of the award itself, which has only been granted once before, to Michael Brooks, executive director of the University of Michigan Hillel, in 2010.

"It's about pluralistic education, which is the story of my life, and I'm also very connected to the seminary. I have very fond memories of my time there as an undergraduate, and also there is no doubt that the professors I encountered there influenced my career, my life and just about everything about me," he said.

"The largest part of my work has been in pluralistic settings, teaching at McGill [University]... I was training Jewish studies teachers, but in a secular setting, dealing with all kinds of schools and dealing with all kinds of students with a broad range of Jewish backgrounds," he said.

His 18 years with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the following 10 years as senior vice-president of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and head of the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (formerly known as the Board of Jewish Education) gave him an outlet to continue working with Jews of all backgrounds.

"We were dealing with schools that were radically different from each other in many cases, and all kinds of different persuasions and beliefs. Most of my work has been in that kind of a setting, and that is what the award is all about," he said.

In recent years, Epstein has been lending his time and expertise as a consultant to First Nations and Islamic educators.

"I've been doing some work with Aboriginal First Nations communities in the field of education. There is a relationship between Jewish education and some of their concerns, like an interest in language acquisition," Epstein explained.

Seymour Epstein

"They have a language they would like to revive... and they are also concerned about maintaining a minority culture in an overwhelming majority. Jews know a lot about that... They are in the process of creating some schools and school boards, and I have a lot of experience with school boards, so I've been helping them out with some things."

He is also on the advisory board of the Islamic Teacher Education Program, a one-year online professional development program for Islamic school teachers.

"This is not within the Jewish world, but like the Aboriginal world, it requires someone that can appreciate what pluralist education is all about," said Epstein, a published writer with a memoir titled *From Couscous to Kasha: Reporting from the Field of Jewish Community Work* that details his international development work and history of community development in Russia as the Soviet Union collapsed.

As for the current state of the Jewish day school system, Epstein there are some new trends in North America, and in Toronto specifically, that are part of an effort to attract more people to choose Jewish education.

"But there is a need for much, much more if we're going to appeal to Jews... who are unconnected. The existing institutions are not necessarily going to attract them, which means that new portals and new institutions will have to be created by that sector itself with help from the strong centre. I think there is a need for different kinds of institutions that will attract different kinds of Jews," Epstein said. ■

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GUEST VOICE

We have no choice but to care for each other

Morris Zbar

There's a well-known joke which, paraphrased, asserts that if you ask two Jews a question, you're likely to receive at least three opinions.

The truth is that while we all have our opinions, and while we, as Jews, certainly don't agree on everything, the 2014 General Assembly conference of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), which recently wrapped up in suburban Washington, D.C., stressed the importance of coming together for one another, despite our differences.

Or, as one of the keynote speakers, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Britain's former chief rabbi and a highlight of the event, said during his stirring plenary address, "I don't need you to agree with each other. I need you to care about one another!"

And in today's world, with Israel again in crisis, more than 20,000 Ukrainian Jews in the line of fire; a virulent resurgence of anti-Semitism in eastern Europe, Jews being attacked on the streets of France, and a new adaptation of the old virus that sees anti-Semitism camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism, do we really have a choice?

Combine these compelling and frightening global realities with the needs and challenges specific to our own communities and it's vital that we put aside our differences – petty or not – and focus on the one thing that truly matters, and that is the well-being of the Jewish People, regardless of where they reside.

As president and CEO of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, I was proud to participate in this important event, the pre-eminent leadership retreat for federation volunteer leaders and professionals from across North America and around the world. It is an event that reaffirmed what I had already known: that the Jewish federation system is unique and vital for a number of reasons, most notably for its ability to look at the whole picture, across the board, across the Diaspora and across the globe.

To that end, the cadre of engaging, inspiring speakers whom I had the pleasure of hearing – from leaders in politics and journalism to religion, the arts and the media – were not only there to entertain, but to help us think outside the box in new and dynamic ways about matters that are important not only to Toronto's Jewish community, but to Jewish communities in more than 70 other countries across the globe, all of which share commonalities unique to being Jewish in today's often challenging climate.

There were a number of other highlights during the conference, dubbed "The World is Our Backyard", including an address by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden, who spoke of President Barack Obama's "iron-clad" commitment to Israel's security and even took a moment to reminisce about the time he took his children to where the Dachau concentration camp once stood as a lesson about what he called the "incredible resilience and indomitable nature of the human spirit."

We heard from Jon Medved, a leading Israeli venture capitalist about the role of technology in creating the next generation of Jewish communities. Of course, with more than 3,000 high-tech companies and start-ups, Israel has the highest concentration of high-tech companies in the world, apart from Silicon Valley, so this wasn't a new message, but it was still nice to hear.

It was a wonderful experience being with 3,000 other people who are all committed to improving Jewish lives across the globe. We shmoozed, we ate, we discussed, we discovered, we listened and, most importantly, we learned that, like each of you, those of us who work day in and day out in the business of Jewish philanthropy have the ability to effect meaningful change in Jewish life when we work together for one common goal.

After all, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, like all Jewish federations, touches more Jewish lives than any other Jewish organization, and, with some 200,000 individuals living here, in our own backyard, it's a responsibility that we don't take lightly. ■

Morris Zbar is president and CEO of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

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GUEST VOICE

Hillel at York is reaching out to other groups

Zev Gasner and Natalie Slavat

Strengthening ties with other student organizations is a key focus of York University Hillel this year. Rather than fearing interaction with others on campus, we're building bridges.

Voices that are negative toward Israel have received a great deal of publicity over the years. On a campus that is as large and diverse as York, it is not unexpected to hear such voices. We've decided to respond proactively to what we see around us. We are proud that our university values freedom of speech and multiculturalism, and we seek to use those values to our advantage.

We at Hillel at York have made it our mission this year to promote and enhance student campus life and leadership. We started the year knowing we wanted our focus to be on making students feel like they have a home at Hillel and on the York campus. We wanted to renew and enhance relationships within the university with other students and clubs. Our challenge was to figure out how to accomplish this goal. How do you make students feel comfortable, get involved, become leaders and commit to enhancing the campus community? Being a commuter school makes that challenging, since students often simply come to class and then go home, with no commitment to enhance campus life

After careful deliberation and discussion with our director, Tamara Caplan, we decided the ideal way to handle this dilemma is to work on enhancing our "social network" on campus. By reaching out to other clubs and organizations, we hope to create a comfortable social and educational climate for all.

We started this initiative by joining the York University Interfaith Council. Representatives from each faith-based club on campus meet weekly to discuss events, network and explain their club's platform. We have built bridges with many clubs so far with whom we will be partnering. For example, we have collaborated with Leadership, Culture and Christianity, as well as the Catholic Chaplaincy at York University. We have partnered with Sick Kids Charity Club to put together an event in support of cancer awareness month. We have partnered with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Students Association to put together a Nov. 10 conference discussing different religions, which was expected to attract more than 300 students. We have partnered with the Random Acts of Kindness club to help them get their movement off the ground. We have taken the initiative and offered our lounge area to other clubs in need of a meeting space.

> *Rather than fearing interaction with others on campus, we're building bridges*

In the first two months of school, we managed to forge bonds with 10 new clubs, and this number will continue to grow over the year. We have shown that Hillel and the Jewish community are open to collaborating on a multitude of projects. We have shown them that reaching out and coming together should be a core component of a university experience.

We are all York students. In order for there to be a comfortable and inviting social and academic environment, we must help one another. If there is one thing that being active at Hillel at York has taught us, it is how special, diverse and unique the Jewish community on campus is. We are fortunate to be a part of a Hillel that welcomes students from all ends of the religious, political and cultural spectrum, all of whom have come to call Hillel their home. We want to show the rest of the campus community just how much we have to contribute to the York community, and we hope to encourage others to do the same. ■

Zev Gasner and Natalie Slavat are co-presidents Hillel at York.

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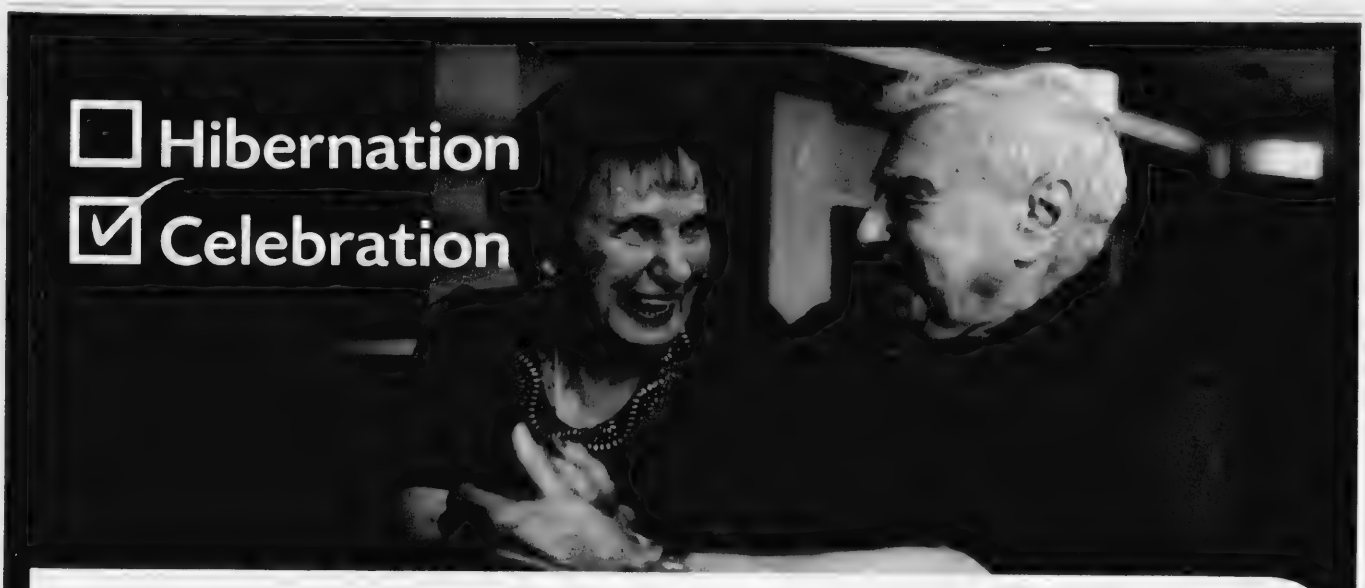

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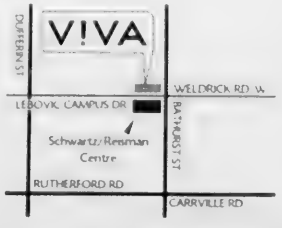

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 20, 2014

Toronto man needs live liver donor

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Thornhill, Ont., resident Bradley Ezra, 52, has never asked for anything.

But now he needs a live liver donor for a liver transplant or he won't survive, someone between 18 and 60 with O Positive blood type, who is healthy, willing and able to donate.

Ezra was employed by Canada Post. He suffers from Crohn's disease, and in 1988, he had emergency surgery for an abscess. His disease was under control until 1995. Then, suffering with massive pain, he had to go on disability insurance.

"With medication," Ezra says, "my life turned around and I was able to enjoy my meals again."

In August this year, Ezra again had severe pain and went to the hospital with kidney stones. "We were thrilled with the results of the treatment," says Gail Levine, Ezra's partner for 13 years.

"Our joy was short-lived," she adds. "A radiologist at the hospital, who had some concerns, arranged further testing, and six weeks later Bradley was diagnosed with primary liver cancer."

With chemotherapy, the tumours are not spreading but the therapy will only buy him time, Ezra says.

He does not meet the criteria for a deceased liver donor.

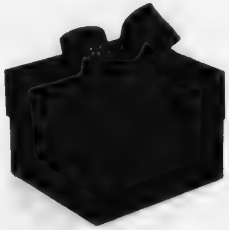
Most often, liver transplants are done with close relatives. Ezra's family and many close friends have been tested, but they are not a blood type match or are not medically well enough. The blood type of the donor and the recipient must be compatible but not always identical.

Bradley Ezra

In a live donor liver transplant, a portion of the liver is surgically removed from the liver donor and transplanted into the recipient immediately after the recipient's liver has been entirely removed.

This is possible because, unlike other organs in the body, the liver has the ability to regenerate or grow within a period of four to eight weeks after surgery.

"It is considered a mitzvah to save someone from danger," Levine told *The CJN*. If you are considering helping or if you have any questions, contact Gail Levine at gail1128@outlook.com. ■



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Space created with diverse learners in mind

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The newly launched Kimel Centre for Inclusion at Netivot HaTorah Day School addresses educational challenges for diverse learners, and acknowledges that all children learn in different ways, said Lauren Korzinstone, the school's director of educational support services.

The centre, opened earlier this month, was developed to focus on the "critical link between the school environment and how students learn. I wanted to create a space that was designed with all of our diverse learners in mind," Korzinstone said.

Featuring a lounge that provides a comfortable space for students to meet, sliding pocket doors that allow for the space to be partitioned, silent study rooms, and technological accessories including a Smart TV, touch screen computers, and iPads, the $300,000-centre, funded by Warren Kimel and other donors, focuses on inclusion.

"The idea is that all students should feel supported, confident and respected. In the past with special education, you really needed a label in order to get extra services. Moving away from that, Best Practices in Education now focuses on inclusion. So there is this acceptance that all children learn in a different way, everyone has strengths and weaknesses and children should feel safe and supported in reaching their personal best," she said.

When the planning began a year ago, Korzinstone said a lot of research was conducted to determine how the space could best benefit diverse learners.

"There is one area that we call an active learning space and it is very different than a traditional classroom. In a traditional classroom you have the front of the room, you know where the board is, it presents more of a top-down model, where the teacher would provide directives," she explained.

"In our active learning space, it's not clear where the front or back would be because there are writing surfaces right around the room and colour was used very purposefully to promote group work and collaboration."

There are two silent study rooms, one of which caters to students who are sensitive to sensory stimulation and may be seeking a place that is quiet, calming, and will allow them to focus, while the other is for students who may need extra sensory stimulation.

Lauren Korzinstone, Netivot's director of educational support services, welcomes a group of students to the new Kimel Centre for Inclusion.

"So we have furniture that moves and wobbles... as well as quite a bit of technology, and computers for them," she said.

The centre is a compliment to the Pidolsky-NESS department, which delivers services to diverse learners at Netivot, including psycho-educational testing, therapeutic counselling, speech language therapy, and occupational therapy.

Korzinstone said that in the past, the Pidolsky-NESS programming focused mainly on curriculum support, working on the curriculum and reviewing the material.

"Now what is different with the Kimel Centre, is that we've created a new program. We're offering what is called cognitive programming and it is offered to children to help them become more aware of their own thinking, learning styles and capabilities, and the purpose is for students to develop learning strategies that can be applied to all curricular areas," she said.

"In the first week alone, 197 students visited the centre to take a look... It's designed so that all students could access the space." ■

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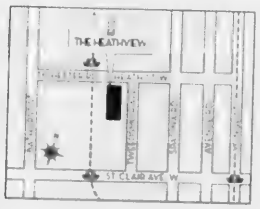

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Shmittah makes comeback

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

There's a biblically sanctioned practice from ancient times that appears to be making a comeback in the modern State of Israel, not just among observant Jews but also with hipsters concerned about social justice and the environment.

Israelis are increasingly coming to adopt the practice of shmittah, literally "to release," in which once every seven years, farmers put down their plowshares and give the earth a rest.

The current sabbatical year began in September 2014, or in Tishrei of 5775 in the Jewish calendar. During the current year, many farmers, including individual landowners or those working in kibbutzim and moshavim, generally will not plant, prune or tend their land, other than to gather fruits, vegetables and grains that grow naturally. In ancient times, they were also required to open their fields to the poor.

An Israeli journalist called the growing popularity of shmittah, "The hippest commandment for progressive Jews."

One of the practice's foremost advocates, Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, was in Toronto last week to discuss the practice with rabbis, students and members of the community. Rabbi Rimon, whose surname translates as "pomegranate," believes the practice of shmittah has benefits to its adherents far beyond the purely agricultural practice of letting the land lay fallow.

Those are spiritual and social, and they connect people to the environment, Rabbi Rimon said.

Citing Torah parshot and halachic authorities, Rabbi Rimon said the rationale for practicing shmittah today are numerous: it assists the poor, it ties people to the land of Israel, it develops the quality of relinquishing something of importance, it manifests trust and belief in God, it allows people to decompress and get away from striving for material things, and it brings families closer together.

"I'm trying to take all the moral things of shmittah and transfer them to modern society," said Rabbi Rimon, who estimates that over the years he's lectured on the subject to more than 70,000 people.

An educational guide prepared by the Halacha Education Center, which Rabbi Rimon founded in Israel, states that shmittah accomplishes for society what the Sabbath does for families and individuals: it interrupts "the mundane life of society in order to allow the revelation of the Divine light that is concealed within it."

Rabbi Rimon, a recognized *posek* who renders authoritative decisions on questions of Jewish law is also the author of *Shemita: From the Sources to Practical Halacha*. He said the practice of shmittah bridges the gap between capitalist materialism and the requirement to help those in need.

"It teaches how to make the right economy. On the one side is capitalism, but from the other side it speaks of a way to fix all the problems that the capitalist system brings, helping poor people" through tzedakah and chesed.

In ancient times, Rabbi Rimon continued, when everyone worked in agriculture, shmittah meant stopping work on the land, allowing poor people to take foods that grew naturally, and finding more time to spend with your family. "For one year, the society changes, becomes more united, more giving."

The rules of shmittah can be complex but as it's practised today, farmers can gather the produce that grows naturally, but they cannot charge anyone for the cost of the goods themselves, only for the cost of labour incurred in harvesting them.

The goods are then made available in grocery stores, clearly marked as shmittah produce. The Gush Etzion outlet of the Rami Levy Hashikma Marketing grocery chain, one of the country's largest, carries shmittah produce exclusively, Rabbi Rimon said.

In Israel, a sort of buyer's club called Otzar Ha'aretz, also sells shmittah products to its members.

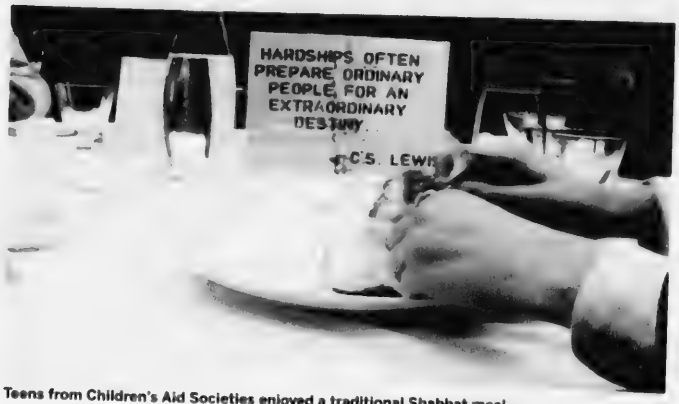
One of shmittah's requirements, releasing people from their debts, presents all kinds of complex issues, Rabbi Rimon said. He suggests complying with the spirit of the law by helping those less fortunate.

"Take the idea of shmittah and help someone during that year," he advised.

That approach appeals to Israelis, whether secular or observant, he continued. "They see the social side, the side where if you see a problem as [a] capitalist, then the answer is in shmittah."

"Also, they want to be connected more to Torah. This is a way for someone not religious, who does not do mitzvot, to still find a connection" to the Torah, he said. ■

Non-Jewish teens learn about Shabbat with JF&CS



Teens from Children's Aid Societies enjoyed a traditional Shabbat meal.
JORDAN ADLER PHOTO

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Nearly a dozen teenagers stood around a table making small talk as they took slabs of dough, rolled them into three thin ropes and then attempted to braid the strands of dough together.

One of the girls finished her small piece before the rest, showing off her creation as the rest of the teens struggled with crossing the ropes together to make a cohesive loaf.

One of the supervisors looked enthralled, commenting that the girl should be a baker. "I've actually always wanted to be a baker," the teenager replied. She had just made her first challah in only a couple of minutes.

This challah-making workshop was one highlight of a Shabbat dinner hosted by Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) on Nov. 12. Youths 16 years and up from six non-Jewish Children's Aid Societies in the Greater Toronto Area were invited to partake in the weekly Jewish custom.

"Being able to share some of our traditions with other agencies, whose kids may not have been exposed to [Shabbat] or didn't know a lot about it, it's just really special for us," says Jodi Rishikof, a children and care worker for JF&CS.

Rishikof planned the dinner with Felicia Finkelstein, a social worker for the Jewish organization. When they attended YouthCAN, a conference bringing together Children's Aid Societies in Ontario, they discussed with other social workers from Toronto about events to involve older youths from around the city.

"We proposed the idea of a Shabbat dinner," Finkelstein told *The CJN*. "We brought it to our kids [at Jewish Family & Child] and they loved it. They were just really excited about teaching other kids about our culture."

Helping Finkelstein and Rishikof plan this event were members from the "Just-Us League," a JF&CS foster kids youth group. Several of them attended YouthCAN and started brainstorming about ideas for the dinner.

The Just-Us League is a support network for older teens that either live in or have recently left a group or foster home. At the age of 21, the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services cuts funding for those still in foster care.

The dinner was also a good way for Jewish youths who do not celebrate Shabbat every week to partake in the religious custom. Some of the Just-Us League members got up to say the blessings over the candles, grape juice and challah before the meal.

This was the first time that JF&CS has put on a Shabbat dinner, however, the dinner did not strictly abide by all of the traditional customs.

For instance, the hosts planned it for a Wednesday evening. On a Friday, they would not have access to the Lipa Green Building, which housed the dinner, after a certain hour. Meanwhile, trying to get youths coming from children's aid societies in different corners of Toronto, like Durham and York Region, for a twilight start time in the late fall is not quite feasible.

"This is a tough age to get them engaged [in programs]," Finkelstein said. "If they're not into it, there's no reason to do it."

Regardless, the participants were in high spirits, speedily gulping down glasses of grape juice as they waited for the meal to begin. When Rabbi Ronald Weiss, the director of chaplaincy services for JF&CS, visited to speak to the gathering of nearly two dozen youths about the holy day, the teens were attentive and curious.

"That's the atmosphere we get at all our events," Rishikof said. ■

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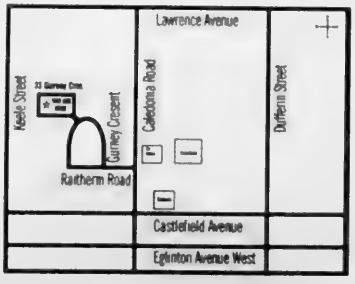

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TDSB trustee charged with criminal harassment

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Howard Goodman

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustee Howard Goodman, 63, was arrested Nov. 12 on charges of criminal harassment and forcible confinement.

Police said Goodman allegedly harassed an individual from the fall of 2013 until the present, and that, on one occasion, he "forcibly confined" this person. Police said they're conducting an investigation into the matter, and Goodman is scheduled to appear in court Dec. 18.

A Toronto police spokesperson would not release the name of the alleged victim, and TDSB spokesperson Ryan Bird said, "As [the matter] is before the courts, we won't be commenting. We're referring questions to the Toronto police."

But both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* have referred to anonymous sources that say the alleged victim is TDSB education director Donna Quan.

Goodman, trustee for Ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence since 2003, did not seek re-election in the recent municipal race, and his seat will be taken over by Jennifer Arp next month.

Last May, Goodman wrote a letter to his constituents telling them that over the past few years, "The 'cut and thrust' of typical politics have overshadowed all else."

> *The 'cut and thrust' of typical politics have overshadowed all else*

In the months prior, Goodman had received negative attention for alleged bad behaviour at board meetings.

According to the *Star*, Goodman had apologized to Quan in December for an outburst he admitted was "not the friendliest."

In March, Goodman sent Quan an email, which he also forwarded to the other trustees on the board. In it, he apologized for his behaviour at a board meeting several days earlier, at which he'd apparently confronted Quan about the issue of outstanding fees to the Ontario Public School Boards Association, an organization that represents school trustees across the province.

He wrote, "It was not my intention to cause distress. In addition, if you and/or others did feel my behaviour to be out of line, it would be of great help to have a conversation about what it was that I said and/or did that caused these feelings. Such a conversation may avoid these sorts of unpleasant misunderstandings in the future."

Following the incident at the meeting, Quan and several senior staffers wrote a letter to the chair of the TDSB and expressed feelings of intimidation, as well as referring to a culture in which board staff had to deal with abusive, threatening and insulting comments by some trustees.

Shortly after the news that Goodman had been arrested was made public, Sam Sotiropoulos, outgoing trustee for Ward 20 Scarborough-Agincourt, tweeted "Finally. #TDSB Trustee @HowardGoodman has been charged by police for his treatment of director Donna Quan."

Sotiropoulos also tweeted a copy of a letter he wrote in January to the then-TDSB chair Chris Bolton, in which he referred to a meeting where he felt "Trustee Goodman's tone and manner were threatening and unprofessional."

He said that after he submitted that letter of complaint about Goodman, Bolton told him that the matter would be referred to the TDSB's code of conduct committee, but Sotiropoulous added that, "to my knowledge, that never happened."

Sotiropoulos, who lost his seat to Manna Wong in the Oct. 27 election, has himself been no stranger to controversy. In late August, he drew criticism for tweeting that he "reserve[d] the right not to believe in [transgenderism]," until he sees "scientific proof." ■

Zareinu students walk the runway at fashion show

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Zareinu Educational Centre's 11th annual fashion show raised more than $400,000 in support of the school and treatment centre for children with physical and developmental challenges.

For the first time, the fundraiser, held Nov. 10 this year at Toronto's Park Hyatt Hotel, was split into two events. The 650 guests could choose between attending either an exclusive luncheon event or an evening cocktail party, both of which were followed by a haute couture runway show in which a number of Zareinu students participated.

"Seeing those gorgeous kids up there, proudly strutting it, beaming with courage and determination, is the sweetest sight imaginable," said host Jeanne Beker.

Esti Cohen, Renee Rosenzweig and Stacy Markin have jointly co-chaired the event since its inception. At the luncheon, Markin shared with the crowd an emotional breakthrough that happened only days before.

"Miracles do happen at Zareinu! My daughter, Shayna, graduated from Zareinu seven years ago – she is now 19 years old. Shayna has severe neurological challenges, and the prospects were grim: we were told she would never walk or talk.

"Nevertheless, Zareinu laid the foundation of a future filled with happiness and hope for Shayna.

"When Shayna was six years old, she pointed to my picture and said 'Momma.' This long-awaited milestone was huge. It was a miracle. Shayna does not talk," her mother said.

"Until last week, whenever Shayna wanted my help, she would point or take my arm and lead me. This time, Shayna walked over to me, looked into my eyes and said 'Momma.' I asked her what she wanted and she pointed to her iPad and took me by the arm and led me to it. She then said 'iPad.' As it had run out of batteries, she couldn't get it to turn on. I asked her if she wanted it on, she nodded yes and said 'on.'

"We had a conversation. She got what she wanted... and so did I," said a beaming Markin.

Zareinu student and event model three-year-old Lea Melkuev has Down syndrome and has had two successful heart surgeries in her short life.

Zareinu student, Lea Melkuev walks down the runway with her physiotherapist, T.S. Frankel of Zareinu Educational Centre. GEORGE PIMENTEL PHOTO

"A miracle happened when Lea started to attend Zareinu," Lea's father, Oleg Melkuev, said.

"When Lea came to the school at two years of age, she was this adorable, sweet girl who couldn't even sit up straight. When you put her into a sitting position, she kind of flopped over," said T.S. Frankel, a physiotherapist at Zareinu.

Today, Lea can stand at a table and play, and she can walk holding someone's hand.

"We are using the Dynamic Method of Kinetic Stimulation (MEDEK), a physical therapy intervention to develop functional movement," Frankel said. "Unlike other interventions, tasks can be performed without the child's attention, conscious thought or co-operation. By challenging the child's balance in the upright position, our goal is to develop stability. The MEDEK therapy focuses on training movements leading to sitting, standing and walking.

"Lea is a very bright girl, hard worker and delighted with her accomplishments," Frankel added.

"My hope is that Lea will be independent one day and be integrated into the public school system," her father said.

One of Zareinu's goals is to have children leave their centre with an increased ability to integrate into more typical surroundings.

Cory Bickof, one of the evening runway models, also has Down syndrome. He came to Zareinu at four weeks of age. Now eight years old, he is fully integrated into a local pubic school. Without the intensive therapies and support received at Zareinu, he would not have been able to achieve this goal

"Cory is able to do so many things independently. He can take his jacket and hang it up. He takes his lunch out of the lunchbox and feeds himself. Cory is now able to use a pen – he can draw and he can write some letters. He is now reading. He is able to interact socially with other children," said Leanne Bickof, Cory's mother

"These are all skills that he learned very gradually," she said.

Zareinu Educational Centre is a world-renowned treatment centre and school for children with physical and developmental disorders.

Proceeds raised from this year's fashion show will be allocated to expanding the integrated preschool program on-site at Zareinu, developing additional satellite classrooms within Toronto Jewish day schools, and providing more services through its mobile unit (known as the YEDA program) to schools in both the private and public school systems, said event co-chair Rosenzweig. ■

For more information, visit www.zareinu.org.

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Claims Conference

Holocaust-Era Assets in Former East Germany
Deadline December 31, 2014

The Claims Conference has established a Late Applicants Fund (**"LAF"**) of €50 million in order to accept applications from certain heirs of a former Jewish owner (**"persecutee"**) of property/assets in the former East Germany for which the Claims Conference received proceeds as Successor Organization under the German Property Law of 1990.

The **heirs** of a persecutee who can make application to the LAF are
(a) The immediate testamentary heir of the persecutee,
(b) Children, grandchildren, or great grandchildren of the persecutee,
(c) Siblings of the persecutee,
(d) Children of siblings listed under (c)
(e) Spouses of persons listed under (b), (c) and (d)

The Claims Conference has published on its website, www.claimscon.org, a list of the **properties/assets** received by the Claims Conference as of the date of publication, and such assets for which claims by the Claims Conference are still pending under the German Property Restitution Law, including the name of the former owners and/or businesses, as well as the addresses of the properties/assets.

Applications can be filed directly with the Claims Conference for no fee. There is no need for applicants to pay a fee to any party. **The LAF will accept applications through December 31, 2014.**

The detailed rules of the LAF, applications, and other information are also on the Claims Conference website, www.claimscon.org.

All applications and communications regarding the Late Applicants Fund must be submitted to:

Claims Conference Successor Organization, Sophienstrasse 26, D-60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.
Fax: +49-69-97-07-08-11. Email: claims-conference-laf@claimscon.org

After the application deadline, the Claims Conference shall determine the payment that each eligible heir will receive. This determination will be based on a number of factors detailed on the Claims Conference website.

To aid applicants who do not have complete information, the Claims Conference has a Department for Property Identification. If you believe that you or your relatives may have owned Jewish property in the former East Germany, please include as much information as possible in your application and the Department will endeavor to identify such property. Please write to the above address. There is no charge for this service as well.

The Claims Conference has an Ombudsman. To contact the Office of the Ombudsman, please email Ombudsman@claimscon.org or write to The Ombudsman, PO Box 585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113, USA

Jewish restaurants helped to 'Feed Democracy'

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

It's no secret that eating out is a social activity, a time when people chat, catch up and discuss issues on their minds.

Those behind the Feed Democracy Campaign were counting on that discussion and hoping to sway it in the direction of politics and the democratic responsibility to vote. It's why they targeted Metro Vancouver restaurateurs, coffee shop and grocery store owners leading up to municipal voting day Nov. 15.

With the permission of business owners, they placed Feed Democracy signs in their establishments, delivered stickers that could be pasted on to-go bags and coffee cups and offered buttons staff could wear, all to encourage participation in the democratic process. Some 45 businesses took part, including several Jewish-owned restaurants and stores.

"We want to raise awareness about the upcoming municipal election and encourage their customers to vote," said Mira Oreck, director of strategic partnerships at the Broadbent Institute, which organized the non-partisan campaign.

"Some businesses are doing more than others, but all have a 'Feed Democracy' decal on their windows and some have tent cards on their tables. The idea is to be where people are, as a way to remind them about the election," she told *The CJN* a few days before the vote.

The Broadbent Institute is an independent, non-partisan organization whose mission is to promote "progressive change through democracy, equality, sustainability and the training of a new generation of leaders."

Several years ago, Vancouver reached an all-time high of 50 per cent voter turnout, but since then, the percentage of citizens casting a vote has hovered in the 30 per cent range. This pilot initiative, funded by Van City Savings, hoped to increase the voter turnout. Oreck said she'd love to see the numbers back in the 50 per cent range, but any increase in voter turnout would be an improvement.

Jason Apple, owner of the food trucks Vij's Railway Express and Roaming Dragon, is one of the Jewish restaurateurs who agreed to participate.

"I think this is super important," he said. "Oftentimes people think their vote won't make a difference. But if we can play a part in reminding and encouraging people to vote, or just to have a conversation about voting, it's a good thing."

The food truck setting is an especially good place to foster those conversations, he added. "It's a great social equalizer because you get people from all walks of life who come to explore the food. The food truck is a place where a judge can have a conversation with a drug dealer outside of a courtroom. We can be the conduit for people to interact."

Mira Oreck

Apple had a sticker on his window and was pasting stickers on takeout boxes to let customers know about the municipal election. "Often it's taboo to talk religion or politics, but this is a great way to say hey, get out there and vote, without talking provocatively about politics," he said.

Marcus Stiller, owner of the Fish Café in Vancouver, agreed that a restaurant setting is a good place to foster conversations, though the only ones he was aware were being generated by the large sticker on his front door and the little tent card by his cash register were among his staff.

"I think a restaurant is a great space to have any discussion, because people generally come to wind down and spend down time," he said. "These days I stand in my kitchen, see into the restaurant and find it frightening how many families come to eat but don't even talk to each other over their tablets and cellphones."

Other Jewish business owners who took part in Feed Democracy included The Kosher Food Warehouse, Nava Creative Kosher Cuisine, Café 41, Sabra and Tap and Barrel.

"One chef told us he feeds 100 people a day," Oreck said. "If those 100 get informed and tell another hundred people, you start to gather some momentum."

With voting day falling on a Saturday this year, observant Jews could cast their ballot as early as Nov. 4, when advance polls opened in Vancouver. ■

Israeli baseball plan seeks local help

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

In Israel, soccer is the undisputed No. 1 sport, followed by basketball. After that you've got tennis, maybe swimming. And cycling seems to be getting more popular. You've got to scroll down, way down, through a bunch of other sports before you come to baseball, the great American pastime.

But lately, the sport has been increasing in popularity, not only among North American olim, but also among native Israelis who are coming to appreciate the intricacies of both the hardball and softball varieties of the game, said Peter Kurz, secretary general of the Israel Association of Baseball (IAB).

One of the things holding back the sport's success is the scarcity of dedicated baseball facilities in the country, specifically diamonds.

Kurz was in Toronto last week to follow up on developments south of the border in which the Jewish National Fund's (JNF) American branch was set to fund the development of several new baseball fields across the country, as well as a baseball complex in Beit Shemesh, as part of Project: Baseball.

Kurz was scheduled to meet with officials of JNF Canada to see if there is any interest in following the American lead. The Canadian Jewish community's support for Israel is well known, he said, and coupled with the popularity of baseball here as well as its bright future in the Jewish state, there's good reason for Canadian Jews to support development of the sport in Israel.

Whether there's any local interest in supporting the creation of baseball fields in Israel remains to be seen. According to Josh Cooper, CEO of JNF Canada, it's too early to tell. Cooper said he is willing to meet with Kurz, following an introduction from his counterpart with JNF USA. "We look forward to meeting him and learning more about the project and the possibility of working together," he said ahead of Kurz's visit.

For Kurz, broad support of the baseball project makes perfect sense.

"Baseball in Israel has always been popular among olim from Canada and the United States. In the last two or three years, 50 per cent of the new players are native Israelis," he said.

"It's a game almost anyone can play. Baseball is a family thing, with picnics and barbecues."

Currently there are more than 1,000 players of all ages playing on 80 teams in five leagues across the country.

Israel has had some success on the international stage, Kurz said. The senior national team won the European Cup C pool qualifiers in Slovenia, moving them up to the B pool next year. As well, the under-16 national team won the silver medal in the Suma Open – PONY League European qualifiers in Prague, and the under-12 national team won the silver in the Tuscany Series Tournament in Italy.

Right now, there are a few modest diamonds in use in Israel, but under Project: Baseball, plans are to add "two or three nice fields, with dugouts and some stands for a few hundred people," Kurz said.

One of the new fields is slated to include seats for 2,000 spectators, which would let Israel host international baseball events. Also on tap are four or five smaller fields in smaller communities across the country.

But the IAB isn't putting all its eggs in JNF's basket. Kurz said the project could find support among the seven or eight Jewish owners in Major League Baseball. There's also private money out there, including in Toronto, that could be donated to the project.

For the IAB, football suggests the model they'd like to follow. Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots NFL team, supports the Israel Football League and the Kraft Family Stadium in Jerusalem.

"We're looking for the Bob Kraft of Israeli baseball," Kurz said. ■

Canadian promoted sport in Israel

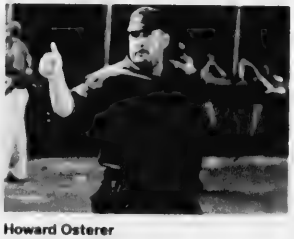
PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Israel's baseball community suffered an unexpected blow last week when Canadian-born Howard Osterer collapsed and died while umping a game in Gezer.

A native of Ottawa who made aliyah a few years ago, Osterer was remembered as a committed Zionist whose dream was to grow the sport that he loved so much in his new homeland.

Osterer, 59, served as the Jerusalem regional director for the Israel Association of Baseball (IAB). He was a certified baseball umpire and had an interest in a variety of sports. Over the years, he contacted *The CJN* to suggest stories on the Canadian Football League, Israeli curling, and of course, baseball in the Holy Land.

"I have the privilege of working with a wonderful group of dedicated coaches and volunteers," Osterer said in an email to *The CJN* only a week before he died. "We are successfully bringing back



Howard Osterer

baseball not just into Jerusalem but right across our country. We welcome and support all youth to the greatest game on this earth."

"It was natural for Howie to incline to organized sports" said former *CJN* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat. "He was always a superb athlete and was recognized as such across the country for his football playing at the University of Ottawa.

"Howie had a very large heart. His shoulders were broad. And he had an effusively mischievous smile. He carried other peoples' burdens as if they were his own. Everybody knew him that way. And that's why those who knew him cared for him, wanted the best for him and now will mourn that he is no longer part of their – our – world," Ben-Dat said.

"I am still in shock," said IAB secretary general Peter Kurz. "He was a great guy. He was so outgoing and happy all the time and so interested in baseball.

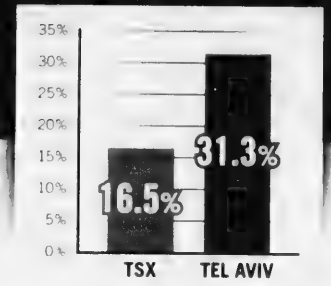
"He died where he wanted to be, behind the plate, umping a game."

Osterer was reportedly umping a game between two teams of 16-year-olds when he signalled for a stoppage in play. Moments later, he collapsed. Despite efforts of doctors present, he died from what's believed to have been a stroke.

The IAB is setting up a scholarship fund in his name to help children with limited financial means play baseball.

Osterer is survived by his parents, siblings, five children and six grandchildren. ■

A LAND OF RETURNS



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Battle over BDS comes to Concordia

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Campaign publicity at Concordia.

A proposed anti-Israel resolution at Concordia University has its supporters and opponents engaged in vigorous campaigns to win over the school's more than 35,000 undergraduates.

During the Nov. 25-27 Concordia Student Union (CSU) byelections, undergraduates will, in addition to voting for representatives, have the opportunity to decide on 10 referendum questions on the ballot.

One of them, the only one not related directly to student affairs, reads: "Do you approve of the CSU supporting the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement which calls for the boycott of all academic and consumer ties with any institution or company that aids in Israel's occupation of Palestine?"

Lauren Luz, one of four students leading the "no" campaign, said the motion was brought to the CSU council by three students late on Oct. 17, a Friday and Simchat Torah, and pro-Israel students weren't able to mount an objection at the time.

CSU chief electoral officer André-Marcel Baril explained that the BDS referendum proposal was passed by a resolution of the CSU council and, therefore, the proposers (a minimum of three undergraduates are required) did not have to collect the minimum of 500 signatures required for a petition.

The yes and no campaigns were permitted to launch on Nov. 11. Proponents have put up posters, including one that claims 800,000 olive trees have been destroyed on Palestinian land by the Israelis since 1967.

The no campaign has the slogan "Concordians United Against BDS/ We Believe in Diversity, We Believe in Freedom, We Believe in Equality."

Luz said that approach is being taken because there are only about 1,000 Jewish students at Concordia, and to succeed, her team must appeal to those who have no stake in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The campaign's Facebook page attracted more than 380 "likes" within a day of its creation."We believe the [CSU] should not be taking a stance on complex, foreign political issues that have no bearing on our quality of student life at Concordia," it reads.

"We believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one such issue that would be incredibly divisive to the student body for the CSU to take a stance on."

Opponents also think that a pro-BDS policy by their student government is contrary to its commitment to serving the interests of all students, and would "be alienating to all those who hold different opinions and would prevent those voices being heard."

The opponents of the BDS referendum argue that not only Jewish, Israeli and other pro-Israel students would feel "uncomfortable and unwelcome," but also "all students who believe that Concordia should be a place where everyone feels welcome and no group feels marginalized."

What's more, they call the resolution "accusatory and one-sided. It fails to acknowledge the responsibility of other regimes for committing abhorrent human rights violations against Israelis (and Palestinians.)"

Luz is a third-year religious studies major, with a minor in Israel studies, and is active with the group Israel on Campus.

In a letter to the campus newspaper *The Concordian*, Bradley Martin, a fellow of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), wrote that support for BDS would be contrary to the CSU's claim that it represents the interests of all students, as well as unfair to Israel.

"Israeli students and those who identify with the State of Israel will be demonized for their affiliation," he wrote.

"If consistency was pursued, then there should be a call for BDS against Syria and those of Syrian descent. However, such actions would be equally as ridiculous as what is being levelled at Israel."

Aside from its discriminatory nature, Martin points out the impracticality of boycotting Israel. "Intel's new multi-core processor was completely developed at its facilities in Israel. Will BDS supporters seek to remove such products from Concordia University, since they are developed and manufactured in Israel?" ■

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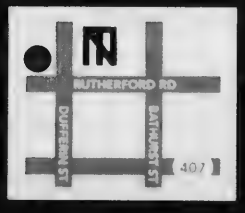

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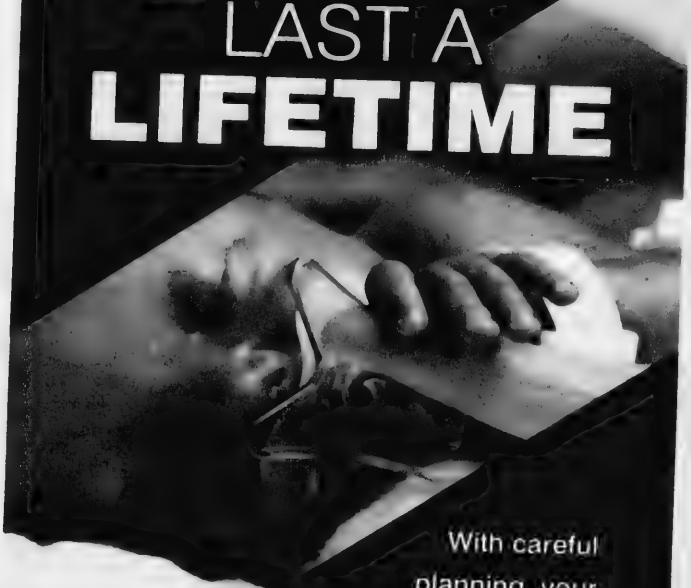

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Academic BDS a growing threat: campus activist

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

The academic boycott of Israel is gaining ground, not so much as a result of student activism, but because a growing number of faculty members openly endorse and promote the campaign, says the director of an organization that investigates anti-Semitism on U.S. campuses.

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, director of the Amcha Initiative, which she co-founded in 2011, warned while in Montreal earlier this month that the academic boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement is, at root, anti-Semitic, and support from North American academics is contributing to the legitimization of the eradication of Israel.

"We are facing a threat, [and] the end game is the elimination of the Jewish state. The notion of academic freedom has somehow become an excuse to hide anti-Semitism or political activism," said Rossman-Benjamin, a lecturer at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

"The boycotters have infiltrated our campuses and sought in the name of academic freedom to stifle all criticism of their behaviour – and they have been largely successful."

University administrations are unwilling to enforce university policies, or even state or federal laws, including those against political indoctrination or discrimination or harassment. Pro-Israel Jewish students, she said, often find themselves in a hostile environment.

"The effect is that the academic mission of universities is being corrupted – political advocacy is winning out over education."

The boycott may take the form of opposition to Israeli academics or universities participating in campus events or publishing in academic journals, to institutional co-operation, and even to student exchanges, she said, as well as calling for divesting university holdings in Israeli businesses or companies that do business with Israel. This anti-Israel sentiment also can be felt in classrooms, in what and how these faculty members teach their students, she added.

The campaign was launched in 2005 by a coalition of Palestinian organizations that included Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, she said.

Rossman-Benjamin spoke at McGill University as part of a lecture series sponsored by the New York-based Institute for the Study of Global Anti-Semitism and Policy. Although she's American, she obtained her undergraduate degree in English at McGill and graduate degree at Concordia University.

Her research focuses on the United States, but she noted that the number of BDS-supporting academics is increasing in Canada as well. She cited a group called Faculty for Palestine, which has more than 500 members at over 40 universities.

At a meeting with members of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, Rossman-Benjamin shared the findings of a recent Amcha study about the boycotters.

It looked at 938 faculty members at 316 U.S. colleges, including all the major ones, who have signed on to one or more calls for an Israel boycott. Amcha found that the vast majority (86 per cent) teach in the humanities or social sciences. Only seven per cent were in engineering and four per cent in the arts.

Of those in the humanities and social sciences, the largest proportion (21 per cent) was primarily affiliated with English departments, followed by ethnic or identity studies (10 per cent), history (seven per cent), gender studies (seven per cent). Only three per cent were in Middle East studies.

She estimates that a significant number of the 938, perhaps 20 per cent, are Jewish.

The connection between English and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seemed remote, until Rossman-Benjamin delved deeper.

Of the 143 English faculty members under study, she found four recurring themes in their areas of expertise – in descending order: race or ethnicity; gender or sexual identity; empire, such as colonialism or post-colonialism; and class theory, socio-economic or political. Fully 92 per cent were engaged in one or more of these interests, she said, compared to 38 per cent of English faculty members as whole.

"I propose that all four of these areas deal in ideological paradigms that pit the oppressed against the oppressor... Israel then fits as the oppressor and the Palestinians as the oppressed."

Rossman-Benjamin believes the solution to stemming BDS on campus is concerted pressure on university administrations from organizations, parents, donors and the public at large as taxpayers. Legal action should also be considered, she said, if government funds are being misused. ■

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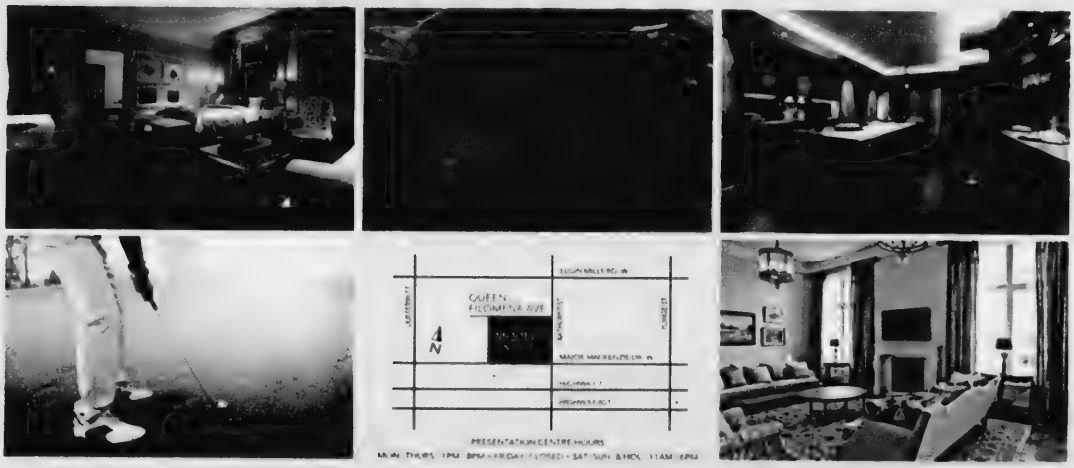

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Security conference focuses on safe cities

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, TEL AVIV

Kevin Vickers, the House of Commons sergeant-at-arms, was honoured for his heroism during the Oct. 22 Ottawa shootings at the third international Home Land Security conference in Tel Aviv.

Vickers, who had already been planning to attend the three-day conference on safe-city initiatives, disaster management and cybercrime before the shootings took place, received a standing ovation from Avi Dichter, former head of the Shin Bet, and hundreds of police officers, businesspeople and political officials from around the world at the opening event on Nov. 9. Among other Canadians present was former minister of public safety Stockwell Day, who joined a panel discussion on Tuesday, Nov. 11.

Day attended with Yaron Ashkenazi, co-founder of AWZ Ventures, a new company bringing Israeli-style homeland security back home to Canada. As strategic adviser to AWZ, Day said the concept of homeland security has been a tough sell to Canadians.

"Canada has been blessed since 1867," he told *The CJN*. "It has not been affected directly by international warfare."

Yet during his term as minister of public safety, security forces managed to "disintegrate" a terrorist cell plotting to destroy the CN Tower and kidnap the prime minster.

"This thing was real," he said.

Calling the recent Ottawa shootings "heartbreaking," Day said they were also a "severe wakeup call about our own vulnerability." One focus of AWZ will be what Day calls "safe smart city" initiatives, which may be better received now than before the shootings.

Several Israeli cities have safe-city systems in place already, particularly those close to Gaza. The infrastructure lets municipalities keep an eye on the streets even in peacetime.

"Once you have a situation," said Day, "citizens with nothing to hide" embrace safe cities, realizing "they haven't lost any freedoms – they've gained freedoms."

Ashkenazi, who is also executive director of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, said AWZ will also promote cybercrime solutions by using its associations with Israeli security firms whose leaders served in security divisions in the Israeli army and who have now retired to the private sector.

> *Companies have been reluctant to invest in cyber protection. But once there's a breach, they'll pay almost anything*

As more and more security, transportation, heating and air conditioning systems go online, cybercrime and hacking have become a major vulnerability. No longer a minor issue for IT departments, it's now a major concern for all stakeholders.

Boundaries between physical and cyber security have blurred into nonexistence. Not only bank accounts and electronic data are at risk, but also physical infrastructure. "As the threat level rises, companies are looking more critically at their own infrastructure," Day said

"Companies have been reluctant to invest in... cyber-protection," he said. "But once there's a breach, they'll pay almost anything. It's one thing to have an ambulance that can pick you up at the bottom of a cliff. It's another thing to build a fence at the top of the cliff."

The three-day conference, which examined intelligence, counterterrorism and law enforcement, drew thousands of participants from all over the world. Speakers included Mississippi governor Phil Bryant and Luiz Fernando Corrêa, security director for the Rio 2016 Olympic games.

More than 70 exhibitors showcased Israeli expertise, mostly gained through military experience.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, met sergeant-at-arms Kevin Vickers Nov. 12.

Knesset honours Vickers

JTA AND CJN STAFF
JERUSALEM

The Canadian Parliament's sergeant-at-arms who shot a gunman inside the Parliament building last month was honoured by Israel's Knesset last week.

Kevin Vickers, who was in Israel for a security conference planned before the Oct. 22 Ottawa shootings, was recognized Nov. 12 by Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein and met with Edelstein in his chambers.

Vickers also met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who praised Vickers for his bravery and quick response, which saved the lives of many.

"This terror attack in Ottawa proves, once again, that Islamic radical terrorism has no limits and respects no borders. Israel and Canada stand side-by-side in the international effort to eliminate terrorism," Netanyahu said.

Edelstein gave Vickers a gift on behalf of the Knesset.

Vickers said in response that "thwarting the terror attack was not my act alone, but that of the entire staff, and we were proud of it."

Edelstein stressed the importance of developing the relations between the Israeli and Canadian parliaments. "You are here not only due to the incident that occurred, but also because we would be very happy to build with the Canadian parliament a tight relationship of co-operation between members of parliament and between professional teams," he said.

Vickers also toured the Knesset and met with Knesset Guard commander Yosef Griff and other senior members of the Knesset Guard, who briefed them on professional issues.

The Canadian delegation's visit to Israel was sponsored by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Vickers, 58, a former RCMP officer, shot and killed Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, who was firing his weapon in the Hall of Honour of Parliament in Ottawa on the morning of Oct. 22. Zehaf-Bibeau had shot and killed an unarmed soldier, Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, who was guarding the National War Memorial.

Hailed as a hero, Vickers received a standing ovation from Canadian lawmakers the following day.

He and other Canadian security and police officials are in Israel for the third international homeland security conference to examine intelligence, counterterrorism and law enforcement.

Vickers was scheduled to be in the Knesset's audience gallery when he received his recognition. ■

OPINION

Remembering the murder, fighting for democracy

Matthew Davidov

Tens of thousands of Israeli youths descended on Rabin Square in Tel Aviv recently to participate in a rally in memory of the 1995 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The "alternative" rally was an astonishing demonstration of the unique nature of Israeli society, and gave hope for a future without the cyclical violence that has plagued Israel for decades.

Unlike the other rallies held throughout the week, this rally was organized by a coalition of youth groups from across Israel and brought together participants from all parts of the political spectrum, from the right to the left, from haredim to Arabs.

The climax of the rally came when Rachelle Frenkel, the mother of Naftali Frenkel, one of the three teenagers murdered in June, kicking off Operation Protective Edge, gave a memorable address. After enduring an unimaginable loss, she stood in front of a massive crowd with a smile on her face and called for peace and coexistence.

Amidst the crowd I saw a singular elderly man video-chatting with his wife and communicating using sign language. He flipped the camera view so that she could see what was occurring in the square, and an infectious grin came to both of their faces.

Although I can only conjecture as to why Rachelle Frenkel, who has just suffered a soul crushing tragedy, and the elderly man could be so joyous, it appeared to stem from the same source as my realization that I will never forget what I witnessed in Rabin Square. Seeing crowds of children from all backgrounds and ethnicities come together, championing a message of peace in light of what seems to be a systemic and ingrained hatred afforded me a glimmer of hope for the future. As an American college student, I felt that the turnout and attentiveness of the teenage attendees made me extremely proud of my Israeli heritage and reaffirmed my commitment to the people of Israel.

There were people of all ages in attendance, but it was clear the rally was by kids and for kids. The older attendees stood on the periphery while members of numerous youth groups emphatically waved Israeli flags and held up signs calling for peace and unity. The rally brought the leaders of tomorrow into one place and provided a fundamental basis of agreement from which dialogue and understanding can develop.

While I grew up in Los Angeles, in what I believe could be considered one of the most politically active and activist societies, I rarely came across people with a fundamentally different view on politics and the world. The lack of exposure to differing ideologies makes finding common ground nearly impossible. Without a base to build on, discussion of opposing ideas becomes divisive rather than constructive.

While the Israeli and American political systems are inundated with polarizing rhetoric, bridging the political gorge begins with a basic agreement on fundamental goals, and respect for the views of those on the other side. In the United States, there is no platform for teenagers coming from divergent political backgrounds to talk or even to be in the same room. That gap feeds more resistance to progress than the substantive differences in the positions themselves.

The rally transcended politics and aligned an estimated 40,000 participants behind the flag of peace. A similar event in the United States is inconceivable to me. Although there are strong social movements incubated across college campuses in the United States, the strong youth groups in Israel provide Israeli democracy with a dimension that is missing in the American system. Civil society is integral to any healthy democracy, and the prevalence and engagement brought forth by youth movements and organizations makes the Israeli system unique and provides a shimmer of light to a seemingly dark future. ■

Matthew Davidov is an intern at The Reut Institute.

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Nationality Law postponed by Knesset

JTA
JERUSALEM

A Knesset committee vote on a law to officially make Israel the nation-state of all Jews was postponed.

Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, head of the centrist Hatnua party, on Sunday postponed her ministerial committee for legislation's vote on the bill known as the Nationality Law.

"The explosive situation that exists in the Arab sector at the moment has already led to violent clashes and casualties. A discussion on the Nationality Law at this time is irresponsible," Science, Technology and Space Minister Yaakov Peri said in requesting the delay of the vote during the committee meeting.

The bill calls Israel the national homeland of the Jewish People and would make Hebrew the official language, with Arabic having "special status." It also calls Jewish law a basis for new legislation.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who supports the bill, said after the committee meeting that he would submit the bill directly to the full cabinet for discussion.

"The State of Israel is the national state of the Jewish People," Netanyahu said in a statement. "This is a central issue which is important for the future of the Jewish People in the State of Israel."

Justice Minister Tzipi Livni

The statement came hours after Netanyahu had opened the cabinet meeting by saying he would move forward on the bill, which was proposed by Zeev Elkin, a member of his Likud party.

Netanyahu acknowledged, however, that the bill "will yet undergo many changes and discussions, but we will make it clear that the State of Israel is the national state of the Jewish People, while providing for equal rights – and ensuring equal rights – for all its citizens." ■

Lancet article author banned from Gaza

JTA
JERUSALEM

A Norwegian doctor who was among the authors of a letter slamming Israel published in the *Lancet* was banned permanently from the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli government said the ban on Dr. Mads Gilbert was for security reasons, according to an email from the Norwegian embassy in Tel Aviv to the *Local*, a Norwegian daily.

Gilbert, 67, told the *Local* he believes he is being excluded because he has made critical comments against Israel.

The doctor said he has spent more than 30 years working in international conflict areas, especially Gaza, the *Local* reported. He spent more than a month this summer working at Gaza's Shifa Hospital helping to treat some of the thousands injured in Israel's operation in Gaza.

Gilbert reportedly was travelling to Gaza late last month and was prevented from crossing from Israel into Gaza.

Norwegian government officials reportedly have asked Israel to change its decision.

In "An open letter for the people of Gaza" published this summer in the *Lancet*, a British medical journal, Gilbert and his co-authors accused Israel of committing a "massacre" in Gaza, among other things.

"This is not about me. This is about Israel denying the Palestinian people in Gaza international support," Gilbert told the British daily the *Independent on Saturday*.

"To deny professionals from the medical field the right to go to Gaza is another aspect of the collective punishment. They're exercising the siege in an increasingly harsh and brutal way." ■

The family of

Sylvia Shanker

deeply mourns her passing. She was a devoted mother to Stuart and Shashanna (Sidnie), a loving Grandmother to Sasha and Sammi, and a loyal friend to her daughter-in-law Virginia and her son-in-law, Ronald. She was predeceased by her beloved husband Samuel Isaac Shanker and her equally beloved sister Irma Pell. She was a gentle, cultured woman who travelled the world, enchanted all whom she met and never put herself first. The world was a better place for her having danced upon it

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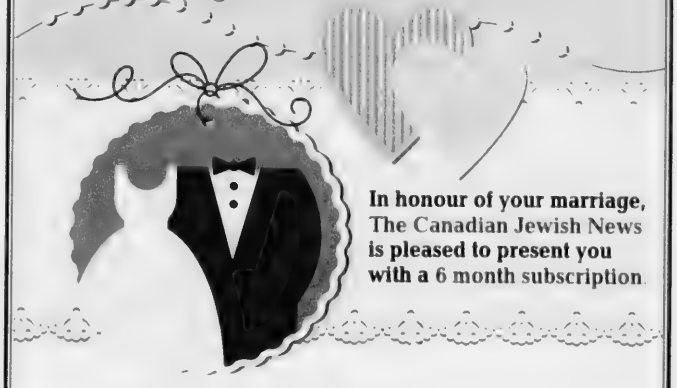

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JCC shooter 'wanted to kill some Jews'

MARISSA NEWMAN
KANSAS CITY

In a first interview since his shooting spree at a Kansas City Jewish community centre and Jewish retirement home, unrepentant killer Frazier Glenn Miller Jr. said last Saturday that he wanted to kill some Jews or attack the Jews before he died.

The longtime white supremacist – who was charged with the murder of three people in the April 14 attack in Kansas, none of them Jewish – also told the *Kansas City Star* that while he regretted killing 14-year-old Reat Griffin Underwood, he is proud of rattling the Jewish community, and does not feel any guilt for killing the other "accomplices of the Jews."

Underwood's grandfather, 69-year-old physician William Lewis Corporon, was gunned down alongside his grandson. Moments later, Miller shot to death Terri LaManno, a 53-year-old Catholic occupational therapist and mother of two, outside a Jewish retirement complex where she was visiting her mother.

In the interview earlier this month, Miller explained that the decision to commit an attack "for the specific purpose of killing Jews" came after his emphysema worsened.

"I was convinced I was dying then," Miller said. "I wanted to make damned sure I killed some Jews or attacked the Jews before I died."

The murderer said he was surprised to hear that the victims of the shooting were not Jewish, saying he was "convinced there would be all Jews or mostly Jews."

But despite not killing any Jews, Miller indicated he was nonetheless satisfied with the attack.

"Because of what I did, Jews feel less secure," he said. "Every Jew in the world knows my name now and what I did. As for these... white people who are accomplices of the Jews, who attend their meetings and contribute to their fundraising efforts and who empower the Jews, they are my enemy too. A lot of white people who associate with Jews, go to Jewish events and support them know that they're not safe either, thanks to me."

But the "young white boy," he said, "I regret that." Miller added that Underwood was 14, but looked 20.

Prior to carrying out the attack, the killer searched for information about the JCC online, but was "careful" to supplement his searches to throw police off his trail. He also scouted out the centre on various occasions.

"I even Googled Islamic community centres, Hispanic community centres, Baptist community centres, just to throw them off," he said. "I didn't drive my truck because I was convinced it was being monitored by satellite by the cops. That's the reason I took my wife's car.

"I drove all the way from my home in Missouri, back and forth, back and forth," he said. "I reconnoitered the damned place."

Miller said he was "terrified of getting caught with these weapons" during the stakeouts, and was astounded that the police were not on to him.

"And nothing happened," he said in recounting the multiple times he visited the JCC. "I parked right in front of it and drove around. If the feds had been monitoring me, they'd have stopped me right then because they were afraid I was going to kill somebody."

After gunning down his victims, Miller said he phoned the police 10 times to turn himself in, but there was no answer. When the police arrived at the scene to arrest him, they brought witnesses to verify that he was the shooter.

"They brought them up in a car and then they took me out of the police vehicle and in front of the car where the people could see me. I screamed at them, 'Heil Hitler. I wish I'd have killed all of you,'" Miller said.

The killer said he murdered his three victims "for my people.

"Not my family," he said. "I told my family when they were kids, I said, 'Look, the reason I had you was to grow up and help me fight the Jews.'"

However, his children were not inclined to participate in his racist attacks, he said.

"They wanted to have a good life and to hell with everything else," he said. "That's the way you all are, you know. All white people are that way. Self-interest. Satisfy their bellies, pocketbook and genitals. And watch ballgames. That's all they want."

In the immediate aftermath of the killings, Miller said he felt elated.

"I have never felt such exhilaration. ... Finally, I'd done something." ■

Times of Israel
TimesofIsrael.com

Conference showcases Israeli security firms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

Ami Daniel and Matan Peled, ex-ship captains in the Israeli navy, founded their company, Windward (windward.eu) to interpret the mountain of data transmitted by ships worldwide, data that is increasingly subject to fraud. As many as one per cent of ships transmit false identities, Daniel told *The CJN*. Others misreport their port of call, or "go dark," dropping off the map.

It's not just about boats on the water.

"We specialize in shipping economics," Daniel said. With global financial investment relying on accurate data, fraud has far-reaching implications. "Nobody knows what's happening in the seas," he added.

What does Israel have to offer the world? According to Daniel, "Pure innovation... and we have a bit of chutzpah."

Israel's Ministry of Public Security hosted one of the largest booths, showing off its latest weapons, systems, and protective equipment. Government-owned Israeli Military Industries, creators of the Uzi submachine gun, greeted visitors nearby. An outdoor exhibit area showcased portable bomb shelters, rugged all-terrain police vehicles and a truck carrying a complete Iron Dome battery.

Not every participant represented a corporate or military angle. Frank Allen Storch of Baltimore came on his own as part of his "Keep Your School Safe" initiative (keepyourschoolsafe.com). Storch, who told *The CJN* that he has met with several schools in Canada, praised exhibitors for their high-tech solutions, but said he's more concerned about protecting kids.

Whether in North American schools or in seminaries or yeshivas, keeping kids safe can be both low-tech and cost-effective. His organization offers a free downloadable guide with worksheets to help schools prepare for disasters of any kind. "Everybody here is selling something... I'm here for the mitzvah." ■

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Israeli soccer team wins

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits the Israeli soccer team dressing room after Israel beat 10-man Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-0 Nov. 16 to climb above Wales to the top of European Qualifiers Group B. Two teams from the six-team group qualify for the European Cup to be held in 2016.

ANALYSIS

Israeli wars – looking back and planning for the future

YONAH JEREMY BOB
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Since 2006, Israel has fought four wars with either Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza.

Given that many consider this summer's Gaza war to have ended in a draw, the next war (separate from the possibly current new intifadah) may be just over the horizon.

With some similarities, the next war may look different from recent rounds, including the possibility of having far more casualties on the Israeli side, even if Israel hits the other side harder overall.

Recently, Israel's Iron Dome and home front preparation blocked significant strategic gains by its attackers' rocket fire.

But in the next war, predictions are that the volume and power of the rockets will grow to a point where they could outpace missile defence and lead to much worse attacks, especially if Hezbollah, after eight years of not fighting Israel, decides not to leave all the "glory" to Hamas.

Hezbollah rocket fire would likely lead not only to more devastating casualties (possibly in the hundreds), but also to short-lightning Hezbollah invasions of Israeli border villages via its underground tunnel network.

Hamas used "offensive" tunnels to emerge behind Israel Defence Forces' defence lines to make trouble, and the assumption is that anything Hamas can do, Hezbollah will do better.

Looking back at this summer's war and at some of these future capabilities, what will Israel's strategy be?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu trumpeted his "patient" approach and minimalist use of ground troops in the last war.

But many former generals and some politicians are pointing out that the government presented a "straw man" kind of decision, saying that the IDF's only two options were complete conquest of Gaza (which few experts supported), or the extremely limited and patient ground incursion Netanyahu ordered.

As one former general has asked rhetorically: when did "patience" in war become considered an inherent virtue?

With 50 days of war, heavy Palestinian casualties, 60 IDF soldiers killed and thousands of targets hit, many did not notice that the IDF's ground troops barely entered Palestinian urban areas, mostly letting artillery and air strikes do the work.

In the middle of the war, many voices, including former Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin, argued that the IDF could strike faster and deeper into the heart of Hamas territory, while stopping short of toppling Hamas or trying to hold territory permanently.

In contrast, Netanyahu said that because of Iron Dome, the IDF could drop its traditional doctrine that, with its limited resources and territory, it needs to win wars fast. Instead, he said that the IDF could wear down Hamas patiently until it accepted a ceasefire.

That did essentially work this time, but maybe it was a one-shot deal.

If Hezbollah showers the country with thousands of rockets a day instead of the 60 to 150 rockets per day from Hamas, harm to the home front will likely be too grave for patience.

That could mean a more aggressive operation earlier, and far more IDF infantry casualties in close-fighting urban warfare.

In that respect, whether the IDF is already mobilized when fighting kicks into high gear will matter.

Many criticized the IDF for delaying and hesitating too much.

But the fact is that with a primarily reserve army, it takes one to two weeks to fully mobilize.

So if Israel has positioned tens of thousands of reserves before fighting heats up, a ground invasion can happen around the same time that rockets start falling instead of coming after the home front has endured punishment for two weeks.

Another issue is that the IDF is not sure it has the right army for fighting its current most likely foes.

Yes, rapid progress has been made in making the IDF faster to better match up with guerrilla forces (as opposed to "traditional" slower and larger conventional forces).

The IDF has far better technological intelligence capabilities and is far more networked into a GPS big picture of where all forces stand to better allocate firepower with pinpoint efficiency and accuracy.

But each improvement has downsides.

The faster, more nimble forces have poorer self-defence capabilities against weapons like anti-tank missiles.

Many of the 60 recent IDF casualties were killed by Hamas' anti-tank weapons fired at unarmoured vehicles that could have been armoured or have employed countermeasures to prevent getting hit.

While the IDF has put air power first, the last war exposed the air force's ineffectiveness against tunnels and showed that striking thousands of targets does not, by itself, stop rocket fire.

Returning to its traditional doctrine of striking fast and mobilizing reserves before large volumes of rockets are landing on the home front can help.

Redirecting some funds from more exciting air strike capabilities to more mundane matters like force protection and engineering answers to tunnels could also help, though past experience leaves doubts as to whether the IDF will focus sufficiently on the tunnels.

But to get optimum results in the next war, generals say the IDF must be ready to adjust to surprises and must not become so dependent on GPS and technological intelligence that its field commanders become less ready to improvise with adversaries who thrive on surprise. ■

Yonah Jeremy Bob is a foreign affairs lecturer and a correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. www.yonahbobforeignaffairs.wordpress.com

EU nations' recognition of a Palestinian state in question

TIMES OF ISRAEL
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Nov. 16 that European calls and efforts to unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state have only pushed peace further away.

"I think the calls that have been coming from European countries, from European parliaments, to unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state pushed peace backwards," he said at a press conference in Jerusalem with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

"[These calls] don't tell the Palestinian Authority that they will have to make genuine compromises and take seriously Israel's legitimate security concerns. They merely award the Palestinians a prize without asking them at all to make the concessions that are necessary for a genuine peace," Netanyahu said.

The prime minister added that a negotiated peace is possible only with compromises from both sides.

Steinmeier said he hopes negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will resume as soon as possible, as "returning to the status quo after the last Gaza war [this past summer] is not sufficient.

"We must step forward, and hopefully, we very soon have conditions that [enable] the negotiations to be continued. There is a need for security and we understand the security concerns here in Israel and perspective for peace," he continued.

The German minister stressed that there is "no other way as to reach this situation of respecting the needs for security on the one side and developing a perspective for peace in the long run, beside and beyond negotiations."

Steinmeier seemed to indicate that Germany also believes the unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state would not be helpful.

"Unilateral activities are not creating the ground, the atmosphere, in which perhaps another approach, another initiative from our American friends will be successful," he said.

Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians collapsed spectacularly in late April after a nine-month, U.S.-brokered effort. The two sides have traded blame for the failure while the United States has, unofficially, largely placed the blame on continued settlement activity and on Netanyahu.

Earlier this month, several European nations reportedly told U.S. officials that they were seriously considering unilaterally recognizing Palestine as a state, as Sweden did last month, if peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians do not resume.

According to a report in the *Wall Street Journal* on Saturday, these countries include some of the U.S.'s closest allies. The report did not specify which, however.

The Palestinians, for their part, are set to submit a draft resolution to the UN Security Council later this month calling for an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines, a senior official said.

Last month, Sweden officially recognized the State of Palestine, making it the first major European Union member state to back Ramallah's statehood bid in this way.

Also last month, London's Parliament voted to urge the British government to recognize a Palestinian state.

French lawmakers are set to vote on a proposal by the Socialist Party urging the government to recognize Palestine as a state on Nov. 28. ■

TimesofIsrael.com

Jewish Life

Mind-reading mentalist takes to the canvas

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Haim Goldenberg, best known as a spoon-bending, mind-reading mentalist, now has another talent to add to his resumé.

Goldenberg's first art exhibit called *Spark of Madness*, featuring a series of portraits, is currently on display at the Thornhill-based 4 Women Gallery until the end of the month.

It's hard to believe that if you had spoken to Goldenberg about producing art for an exhibit just four short months ago, he might have dismissed you.

But according to Goldenberg's manager and wife, Miriam Milashut, the performer has been known to be a little impulsive.

"When he wants to do something, he just does it... He doesn't overthink it," she said.

During a performance in late June for the annual Ideacity conference in Toronto, Goldenberg performed what can only be described as a speed-painting mind-reading demonstration, available on YouTube, that resulted in a portrait of Charlie Chaplin.

"I did a painting on stage and someone came after the show and asked, 'How much?' He wanted to buy the painting... Apparently, he was an art dealer and he said he wanted to see all my paintings. I don't know why, but I said, 'Yes, I have many of them!' So I started to paint," said Goldenberg, who was considered an art prodigy as a child, but turned down a scholarship to Israel's national school of art so that he could serve in the army.

But the person who gave Goldenberg a real push to try his hand at painting was Yoav Raiter, the husband of the 4 Women Gallery-owner Ayala Raiter, who saw the Ideacity performance and pushed Goldenberg to produce more art to be showcased at the gallery.

"I wasn't sure, but eventually, I did it," Goldenberg said. "In the beginning I said no because... for me it is very personal. I do shows in front of many people, but [my art] is very personal."

One of the paintings that is especially personal to Goldenberg is the portrait of the late comedian and actor Robin Williams, who committed suicide in August.

"I really admired him, so I said I wanted to do a painting of him," Goldenberg said.

"When Robin Williams died, [Goldenberg] picked up a piece of wood and started to paint him and didn't stop, and he's been painting every night since then," Milashut said, adding that the title of the exhibit, which is dedicated to Williams' memory, is a reference to a quote by Williams that goes, "You're only given a little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it."

In the few short months that Goldenberg has been painting, the feedback has been nothing but positive.

"We sold a couple of paintings, more than I thought, so that's good," he said.

Ayala Raiter, owner of the gallery that doubles as a workspace for her one-of-a-kind jewelry designs, said that since the exhibit opened last month, more people have come by to see his work than they have for any other exhibit featured over the past two years.

"People are very curious to see his artwork because they know him as a mentalist," she said, adding that they are so impressed, they have approached Goldenberg about commissioning him to do portraits for them.

But when it comes to choosing subjects for his portraits, Goldenberg said he's attracted to those he wants to learn more about.

"When I see someone, I try to read him and I want to see what [he is] trying to express, and that's what I try to put on the canvas when I draw it," he explained.

"I chose people who inspired me, in a good way and in a bad way. For example, Marilyn Monroe. She is beautiful and amazing, but I don't like this celebrity thing. I wanted to see Marilyn Monroe as I see her, not as a celebrity, but as a person."

In addition to portraits of Christopher Reeve in his role as Superman, Woody Allen and Charlie Chaplin, part of his collection is a portrait of a pensive monkey.

"The monkey is interesting because I wanted to draw someone very smart. I thought about Einstein, and I started to look at some pictures on the Internet and I didn't find someone who I thought was really smart, so that's how I found this picture. He's not smart, but he looks like he's thinking," Goldenberg said with a laugh.

Although painting is his latest passion, Goldenberg is not letting his work as a mentalist take a back seat. In addition to live performances, Goldenberg, who is famous for his Gemini-winning reality show called *Goldmind*, recently shot a pilot in Toronto for a new show called *Mind Makeover* that he's looking to sell to American television networks.

"It's a new concept. It's about making people believe in themselves. It's very empowering. It's less about mentalism, and it's more about believing in yourself."■

For more information about the exhibit, visit www.4womengallery.com.

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Young Toronto musician releases debut EP

Scott Helman, 19, goes for a walk in Kensington Market, from where *Augusta* gets its name. CHRIS PAYNE PHOTO

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If you want to become part of Toronto's thriving music scene, singer-songwriter Scott Helman has one piece of advice: write as many songs as you can.

"That craft will take you farther than anything," Helman tells *The CJN*.

The 19-year-old musician can testify to that: Helman just finished a six-month writing and recording spree leading up to the release of his first EP, *Augusta*. The record dropped on Oct. 14, and the Toronto native plans to start touring around Ontario in November.

Playing concerts is something that gives Helman great joy. He was performing for his friends at the Aspetta Caffe in Toronto's Kensington Market even before he caught the eye of League of Rock founder Terry Moshenberg.

Moshenberg, who is now Helman's manager, talked to some contacts at Warner Music Canada, and they decided to take a chance on the young singer. At the time, Helman was only a year into high school.

From there, things came together slowly. Every so often, the teen would have a writing session with artists and songwriters who helped him develop ideas. Helman worked closely with Simon Wilcox, whom he co-penned *Augusta* with, while Warner's Ron Lopata offered helpful direction.

As soon as he had proven his worth and officially signed with the label two years later, Helman started working at full speed. While writing music can be a scary, bewildering process, Helman says getting into writing a song is his favourite part of making music.

"When I'm in a writing session, I feel like I'm making art fully and truly," he says.

His debut EP gets its title from an avenue in Kensington Market, a place Helman says makes him think back to working on and recording the album.

"It's sort of this accumulative place," Helman says. "The first place me and my band played was at The Supermarket, which is on Augusta. Five months later, I got an apartment there for two weeks. I ended up finishing this record while I was there. It just seemed like the street was where it all started."

Augusta's release and tour will sum up a breakthrough year for Helman, who has opened in concert for Tegan and Sara, as well as Matthew Good. During Leonard Cohen Week in September, Helman performed a cover of *Suzanne* on CBC Radio 2.

Even though he has lofty musical dreams and says he plans to keep writing songs for as long as he can, Helman does not know if selling out big arenas to make money is something he foresees. He says he would rather do an intimate show at a small club or café, where he can see the audience react and respond to his music.

"When you're onstage... it's like you're connecting [with people] in a way that doesn't really exist in any other part of life," he says. "It's ineffable. Especially when you're young and you don't feel secure... being on stage is where you get a good response all the time and you know who you are."

Helman currently listens to a wide variety of rock music, from Hozier and Sun Kil Moon to classic acts like The Band and Neil Young. Helman even got to step onto the stage where Young had played many concerts, when he performed at Toronto's historic Massey Hall in September.

"It was the first show I played where I felt like, this is where I'm supposed to be," he says. "Just to have a response from an audience that big was really reassuring and special."

Each song on *Augusta* has its distinct sound and style. Scott's favourite track from the album is the emotional, low-key track *Machine*.

A friend of Helman who has had trouble with drug abuse inspires another song, *The Lion*. The titular animal represents a creature that's waiting to pounce and harm.

The biggest crowd-pleasers at concerts, though, are his love songs, including *Augusta*'s lead single, *Bungalow*. Another fan favourite, *Cry Cry Cry*, was inspired by one of Helman's past relationships.

There are more songs in his repertoire, so he should stick with the recommendation to write as often as he can. Meanwhile, Helman says there is another piece of advice he hopes to follow for the rest of his musical career: always be Peter Pan.

"Always be a kid," he says. "Don't ever think you've made it or you've grown or reached a point. For me, I'm always going to stay who I am. And I'm always going to be a kid."■

Augusta is currently available on iTunes and scotthelmanmusic.com.

Adam Cohen goes home to find his muse

Adam Cohen recorded his latest album in the comfort of his family homes.

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Adam Cohen, son of one of Canada's most iconic artists, Leonard Cohen, went home to find his muse for his latest album.

We Go Home, released in September, is Adam's fifth album and by all definitions homemade.

In presenting this new body of work, Cohen comes home to Canada for a cross-country tour, having just completed the first part of his world tour in Europe.

The project is all the more remarkable for being the album that almost wasn't. Cohen completed and then scrapped a previously-recorded album before starting afresh, choosing to heed the distant calling of his family and roots by recording in the living rooms of houses in which he was raised.

Cohen spoke to *The CJN* on tour from St. Albert, a suburb of Edmonton, about *We Go Home*.

"I came off my first success with my last album, *Like A Man* (2012), my first gold record, and watched audiences grow. I thought I was going to have great ease and success making a follow-up, but I had a difficult time."

A gold record signifies sales of 40,000.

"I made a record that was over-eager and not a success. I had no choice but to start over."

Cohen, 42, grew up in Montreal, but today lives globally, in the sense that he travels more of the year than not.

"I retreated into the homes that saw me grow up and I take refuge and comfort in the familiarity of these places. I recorded half the record in our family vacation home on the Greek island of Hydra and half the record in our family home in Montreal.

"It is in the comfort of these homes where I grew up that I conjured my dreams and what I wanted to become. It is where I lived that influenced me and the quality of music I was playing," explained Cohen.

In *We Go Home*, Adam takes a more profound ownership and command of his own voice within a family tradition. He is the link between his father Leonard, and his seven-year-old "boy wonder" Cassius.

"My muse turned out to be my home life, my roots, my family. I think you can hear the camaraderie on the record. I think you can hear the walls and the floors boards of homes that saw me grow up. I am in my father's house; I pass by his hat hanging on the coat rack, and the telephone with enormous buttons," said Adam.

All of Cohen's songs are original and described by him as modern folk.

"The songs on this record chronicle conversations I have had with my father, as well as conversations that I would like to have with my little boy, and basically my attempt to impart some kind of wisdom and humour to my little man.

"What's different is the tone – richer and fuller this time, " he said.

The album cover is a picture of Cohen's son, Cassius, while the back picture is Adam as a five-year-old with his father who turned 80 this past September, and released his own album, *Popular Problems*, a week after *We Go Home*.

"Having a dad like Leonard Cohen has been deeply influential. He is not only my father who I look up to and take guidance from but he is also what I consider to be a remarkable, dare I say historic, figure. It would be impossible and a sign of absurd aloofness for me to not have taken immense inspiration and guidance from him," said Adam.

"I would like to continue charting progress. It's a wonderful thing to watch an audience grow and I've gotten very seduced by the idea of being able to chart even more progress," he concluded. ■

Visit www.adamcohen.com for tour dates and other info.

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX PRESENTS RETROSPECTIVE ON MEL BROOKS

Born on the brink of the Depression in a Brooklyn tenement, **Mel Brooks** (née **Melvin Kaminsky**) worked as a Borscht Belt comedian before helping to initiate a new era of sketch comedy as a writer on **Sid Caesar**'s *Your Show of Shows*. Gaining prominence with his famous "2000 Year Old Man" routine with **Carl Reiner**, Brooks scored more successes on Broadway and television (*Get Smart*). His Oscar-winning, 1968 film *The Producers* propelled him on a three-decade cinematic career of triumphant bad taste, often involving hilarious Yiddishisms.

Now approaching 90 and one of relatively few people to have won an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony, the irrepressible comedian may have attained showbiz immortality – but not, as he once observed, actual immortality. "If Shaw and Einstein couldn't beat death, what chance have I got?" he once quipped. "Practically none."

The TIFF Bell Lightbox has begun a month-long retrospective of the films of Mel Brooks. It continues with showings of *Silent Movie* (1976) on Nov. 20, 8:45 p.m.; *High Anxiety* (1977) on Nov. 22, 10 p.m.; *History of the World, Part I* (1981) on Nov. 27, 8:45 p.m.; *Spaceballs* (1987) on Nov. 29, 9 p.m.; *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993) on Dec. 13, 10 p.m.; and *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995) on Dec. 20 at 9:30 p.m. $12.50, $10. 350 King St. W. www.tiff.net, 416-599-8433.

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Musical Events

• In "Klezmer in the New World, A Musical Alchemy," musician **Jonno Lightstone** demonstrates how klezmer, as transplanted from the Old World shtetl, has been infused with an explosion of Jewish creativity as it adapts to modern times. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursdays, Nov. 20 and 27, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Drop-in, $4 per lecture.

• **Kevin Courrier** continues his series of lectures with film clips on the Beatles: "Fixing a Hole: The Seeds of Break-up" on Monday, Nov. 24, 7 to 9 p.m. Miles Nadal JCC. Drop-in $12, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• **Gerineldo**, a Moroccan Sephardi ensemble, returns to the stage after a hiatus of 20 years. The group consists of **Oro Anahory-Librowicz**, **Solly Lévy**, **Judith Cohen** and **Tamar Ilana**, with guest oud player **Demetrios Petsalakis**. General admission $20. Théâtre de l'Alliance Française, 24 Spadina Rd. Nov. 25, 7:30 p.m. alliance-francaise.ca

• The Civic Light-Opera Co. presents *The Judy Garland Christmas Show (That Never Was)* featuring **Caroline Morodalicandro** as Garland, **David Haines** as Bing Crosby, **Julie Lennick** as Ethel Merman, **Joe Cascone** as Liberace and many others. The spoof-tribute received good reviews in Los Angeles where it originated. $28. Zion Cultural Centre, 1650 Finch Ave. E., Dec. 3 to 14. 416-755-1717, www.MusicTheatreToronto.com

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Arts in Brief

• Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center presents *The Prime Ministers II: Soldiers & Peacemakers*, a film about Israeli prime ministers. Thursday, Nov. 20, patron cocktail reception at Windsor Arms Hotel (5:30 p.m.) followed by screening (7:15 p.m.) at Isabel Bader Theatre. Contact Devyn to register, 416-864-9735, ext. 21, executive-assistant@fswc.ca

• Comic **Deb Filler** performs her show *I Lost It in Kiev*. Factory Studio Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. Nov. 24 to 30. 416-504-9971, www.fillerup.ca

• Meet crime fiction author **Howard Shrier** (*Buffalo Jump, High Chicago, Boston Cream, Miss Montreal*) and creator of the Toronto Jewish investigator **Jonah Geller**. Free. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, Nov. 27, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

• Koffler Centre of the Arts co-presents a staged reading of *Infinity*, a shocking and funny new play by Tarragon playwright-in-residence **Hannah Moscovitch**, developed with Volcano Theatre. Free admission. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m. www.koffler-arts.org ■

Friends of Yiddish

Yiddish Swingtet, pictured, and Kyra Folk-Farber will perform at a Chanukah concert of Yiddish song and klezmer music, Dec. 14, 2 p.m. at the Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Call Sandy 416-458-1440.

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Chamber orchestra puts down its bows after funding cut

STEPHEN CERA
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Koffler Chamber Orchestra and its conductor Jacques Israelievitch

The musical life of Toronto is a bit quieter this season, with the funding cut off for the Koffler Chamber Orchestra (KCO).

Last summer the Koffler Centre of the Arts ended its support for the all-strings orchestra, which since 2005, has been led by Jacques Israelievitch, the respected former concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He is now on the music faculty at York University while maintaining an active schedule as a chamber musician, soloist and recitalist.

The small orchestra, which has a modest budget, was formed nine years ago after Israelievitch was approached by the Koffler Centre.

"What was unusual about it," Israelievitch said recently, "was the combination of students – some younger, some older – community players (not professionals), and professionals who were leading each section. It made for a very interesting mix. I was trying to get as close as possible to a professional level in these concerts."

In artistic terms, he often succeeded. The orchestra played a wide range of music, from Bach to contemporary, often to a standard beyond that of other community orchestras in the GTA. But when their home auditorium, the Leah Posluns Theatre in the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (BJCC), was closed in 2009 and torn down in 2010, the orchestra was left homeless and forced to find other venues. The audience that had been built in the Leah Posluns decreased.

The Koffler Centre is sponsored primarily by the Koffler family, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, government arts councils and private donors.

Noting the drop in audiences, the centre gradually began to question the rationale for supporting the orchestra. Cathy Jonasson – whose background is in visual art and design – became executive director of the Koffler Centre in February 2014 after working for them as an outside consultant. She praises the quality of the orchestra's performances and the dedication of Israelievitch and the musicians, but is reluctant to separate a discussion of the orchestra from the centre's other cultural activities (art exhibits, designer sales, talks by authors, film screenings, small-scale theatre, book awards.)

"The economics of it definitely began to be a problem for us... we weren't drawing a paying audience," she noted. "What was the ambition for the KCO? It wasn't consistent with the overall mandate of contemporary culture that we were engaging with in all the other areas of our program."

Even in the early days, Israelievitch said the level of marketing and publicity support from the Koffler Centre was "very little." He thinks it simply lost interest in the orchestra.

"There were changes of staff, there wasn't that much continuity. It was always somebody different minding the running... and there wasn't that much to run, but to make sure we had a venue in which to perform and a place to rehearse," he said. "We would arrive for a rehearsal and they had the wrong room for us. Or the chairs or the music stands were not there – we would be chasing the janitors... We couldn't contact anybody about it... It was a little bit disorganized. So it was kind of frustrating for us."

In the past decade, the orchestra performed some 25 concerts in a variety of venues, including two concerts at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts in Kitchener, Ont. They played in temples throughout the GTA, in the Al Green Theatre at the Miles Nadal JCC, the Gladstone Hotel downtown, the Glenn Gould Studio, Hart House (University of Toronto), York University, the Art Gallery of Ontario's Walker Court and the Music Gallery.

Meanwhile, the former site of the BJCC near Bathurst Street and Sheppard Avenue remains an empty plot of land. It isn't clear when, or if, a prospective rebuilding of the BJCC will occur on the site.

"The board will decide in the next couple of months whether to proceed," said Morris Zbar, CEO of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. He suggested the old building "wasn't viable any more" and in a state of disrepair. He said the recession set back the timetable for a possible rebuilding. But that old building once provided a home base for the chamber orchestra.

"The original impetus for the KCO was really an interesting one," Jonasson said, "and it made a lot of sense at the moment it was put together. I think many things have happened to the organization since that time. It doesn't fit our mandate as well any more. If we're involved in contemporary programming, if our education imperative is to reach young people and develop a contemporary culture that they identify with, it was becoming something that was tangential to that."

Yet, to cite one example, the educational aspect of gifted young players working alongside professionals in the orchestra obviously had a positive effect on Jaime Kruspe, a young KCO violinist who was recently named the new assistant concertmaster of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra.

And the orchestra, in fact, devoted much attention to contemporary music over its 10-year existence, including a concert of music by four Canadian women composers a year ago. It also performed contemporary works by Walter Buczynski, Ödön Partos, Allan Gordon Bell, Gilles Maurice Leclerc, Alexander Levkovich, Andrzej Panufnik and others.

In October 2013, the Koffler Centre moved its administrative headquarters from the Prosserman JCC campus to the downtown Artscape near Queen Street West, quite far from traditional centres of Toronto Jewish life. Jonasson said this move has helped broaden the audience for the Koffler Gallery and other Koffler Centre activity. "If the BJCC is ever rebuilt, it's not clear that the Koffler Centre would be part of it," she said.

Israelievitch is trying to resuscitate the orchestra under other auspices. The orchestra would need a stable home for its concerts, and a place to rehearse.

"Certainly the members of the orchestra, those that have pursued the activity through thick and thin, they miss it – I know they miss it, they are very sad to have it stop," Israelievitch said. ■

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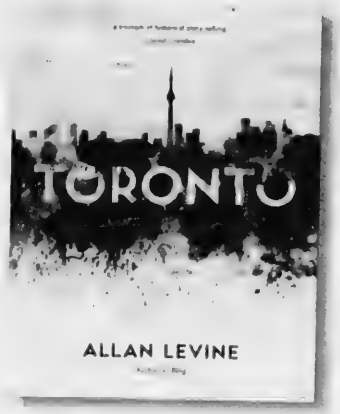
THOMAS (MINUK) ALI

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 20, 2014

A vibrant history of Toronto the Good

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Toronto: Biography of A City
by Allan Levine
(Douglas & McIntyre)

Author Allan Levine

> *Levine excels at integrating large amounts of complex information into a flowing and satisfying narrative*

Ambitious in scope and masterful in execution, Allan Levine's panoramic portrait of our city from its beginnings to the present is sweeping and opinionated, judicious and clever, insightful and gossipy all at once.

This is no dry academic survey, but a lively, popular-style "biography" in the mode of Peter Ackroyd's *London* (2000) and other popular histories of New York, Paris and other cities. Told in chronological order, the story features a cast of hundreds, if not thousands, and a strong sense of movement and theme.

The tale opens with the usual suspects – Etienne Brûlé, Lt.-Gov. John Graves Simcoe, William Lyon Mackenzie and other icons of the city's infancy and adolescence – who are measured against a series of probing questions and insights. Was Brûlé really the first European to arrive here? Wouldn't the city have become more interesting if, instead of Simcoe's imposed gridiron layout, the streets followed the natural topography of rivers and ravines?

Chapter 4, "Orange and Green," describes the endemic Orangeism of the predominantly WASP town and the ferocious Protestant-Catholic clashes that became frequent as a wave of Irish Catholics came here after 1847. At the same time, the city was absorbing a wave of black refugees, fleeing slavery in the United States in the pre-Civil War era. (As Levine notes, it hadn't been so many decades earlier that slavery was tolerated here.)

These are the first thematic strands in a recurrent discussion of Toronto's multicultural fabric. Throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th, Levine observes, religious and class prejudice was an ugly but uncontested fact of life. With his roving and penetrating historian's eye, he also chronicles the rise of the industrial city and the automobile age, the stranglehold of the Sunday blue laws, the birth of Eaton's and Simpsons and other commercial colossi, and the 1872 printers' strike and later clashes highlighting the strengthening labour movement.

Goldwin Smith, the "Sage of the Grange," was Toronto's most renowned literary figure and a notorious anti-Semite. Levine, author of a dozen previous books including a biography of prime minister Mackenzie King, noted that Smith once told King that the Jews "were poison in the veins of the community." King, under whose watch the prohibitive "None Is Too Many" policy against Jewish immigration came into effect, held similar prejudices.

"No member of Toronto's high society (nor much of the rest of the city, for that matter) would have been troubled by such racist sentiments," Levine writes. "Anti-Semitism was too entrenched in 19th-century Canada – and continued to be so until well after the Second World War – for anyone to challenge or question Smith's opinions about Jews."

But as Levine notes, there was also an enduring philo-Semitism here too, a prevailing counterbalancing attitude of tolerance that helped to usher in a new vision of Toronto as a cosmopolitan and multicultural haven.

As a historian, Levine crosses the proverbial Rubicon with the chapter titled "The Ward," which chronicles how Jewish, Italian, Chinese and other ethnic immigrants changed the face of Toronto. It begins with a sketch of the life of J. B. Salsberg.

The importance Levine gives to the city's all-but-vanished Ward neighbourhood is both unprecedented and welcome. Long overlooked, this fascinating downtown district was a landing ground for tens of thousands of new Canadians in the pre-World War I era, and was so densely packed with immigrants that it was often called "Toronto's foreign quarter." From these mean streets came the new blood that would challenge and transform the Canadian establishment and Rosedale's dominance over the city's commercial life.

In subsequent chapters Levine continues to spotlight a parade of Jewish Torontonians – Nathan Phillips, Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster, Paul Godfrey, Sam Sniderman, Mel Lastman, Heather Reisman, the Reichmanns, Ed and David Mirvish – who made major contributions in diverse spheres. Italians, blacks, Asians and a few other select minorities are also highlighted, albeit to a lesser extent. As Levine correctly observes, Jewish Torontonians, although always a small minority, have played an enormous role in making notable achievements, gaining prominence and influence, and shaping the city.

Levine excels at integrating large amounts of complex information into a flowing and satisfying narrative. Although he covers an incredible amount of ground, his pen never seems to grow tired or dull – not even when he is marshalling evidence to show how Hogtown the Good was considered dull as dishwater for decades. (Ernest Hemingway thought the city was stuffy and boring; Emma Goldman thought it was deadly dull "because it's church-ridden – Toronto people are smug and don't think for themselves.")

Although based in Winnipeg, Levine shows how well he understands the city, which became Canada's most populous metropolis after the Montreal exodus of the late 1970s and 1980s. He covers the media, hockey, business, the arts and much more. If there's a flaw in his social history, it's that he pays too much attention to the movers and shakers, and not enough to the lower classes, the low-paid workers and the nameless throngs who inhabit the sprawling 'burbs.

The lurid tales of excessive drinking and cursing from the 19th century, like the class struggles and snobbish arrogance of the business elites, help us understand the city that was. Occasionally, we are given instances of Toronto's restrictive morals, as when an 18-year-old white girl was charged in 1939 for being "incorrigible" because she was living with a Chinese waiter – her infant was taken from her and became a ward of the state. More such stories would have been welcome, even if it meant cropping the hagiographic bios of, for instance, Peter C. Newman and other celebrated writers and moguls. (When writing about the Toronto "establishment," Levine's writing style seems to become cloyingly expansive and Newmanesque.)

Levine's discussion of the John Sewell-David Crombie era, characterized by a "clash of visions" over development, bristles with insight. He is equally savvy about Mel Lastman, David Miller, and even June Rowlands, who is perhaps best remembered for banning the Barenaked Ladies from Nathan Phillips Square. And his coverage of the Rob Ford mayoralty is pure confection, like the candy figures atop a wedding cake. His summation of the Ford years (ending before Ford's dramatic withdrawal from his re-election campaign for health reasons) is simply superb.

"Throughout this poor excuse for a sordid reality TV show, Ford, backed by his brother and lone ally, Coun. Doug Ford, steadfastly refused to resign. Each day in November 2013 brought yet another heartfelt apology from the mayor, blaming the 'tremendous, tremendous stress' he was under, which he admitted was 'largely of my own making,' but always framed in a narcissistic construct that portrayed him as a champion of the people and the only bulwark against taxpayer abuse."

Let's face it: for a writer like Levine, a mayor like Ford is a gift from heaven. And, for all of us who love Toronto, so is this book. *Toronto: Biography of a City* is a timely, vibrant history of our modern megacity as it comes of age – bursting at the seams even as it confronts the numerous problems (traffic congestion, homelessness, urban sprawl) that loom as never before. ■

Meatballs for dinner

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There are a few tricks that can turn a regular meatball recipe into a spectacular one. First and foremost, there's nothing worse than a bland meatball. The kind of meat you use, what you add and how you cook (and for how long) are key to getting the perfect mix of flavour, fat, seasoning and sauce.

You can, of course use beef or ground lamb, turkey or chicken. Just remember the more fat in the meat you use, the more tender the meatball will be. The less fat you use, the tougher the meatballs will be if you overcook them.

I have discovered that the less you mix up the meat and other ingredients, the better the consistency of the cooked meatball. You can use a spoon or spatula to mix, but I think mixing everything up with your hands, just until combined, is the best way to go

There is a real debate in the food world as to the best way to cook a meatball - simmer or roast. For the easy answer to which method to use, look at what the end product will be. If the meatballs are going into a sandwich, being frozen to use later, or being served with a dipping sauce, roast them. If they are being served in a sauce, then cook them right in the sauce

The following recipes are easy to throw together when time is short and the hunger level is high. All the recipes can easily be doubled or tripled.

Meatball Soup

- ❑ 1 can stewed tomatoes
- ❑ 1 cup cooked rice
- ❑ 2 tbsp. oil
- ❑ 1 cup red onion, diced
- ❑ 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 1 beaten egg
- ❑ 2 lb. ground beef
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. cumin
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. oregano
- ❑ 3 tbsp. fresh parsley
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 6 cups beef broth
- ❑ 2 carrots, diced
- ❑ 1 cup shredded cabbage
- ❑ 2 stalks celery, chopped, for garnish
- ❑ 1 avocado, chopped, for garnish
- ❑ 1 tomato, diced, for garnish

In a skillet, heat the oil, then sauté the onions and garlic (don't clean the pan when done, just set it aside). Cook the onion mixture for 5 minutes. In a blender, combine the tomatoes and onion mixture. Process until smooth.

In a bowl, combine the egg, ground beef, cumin, oregano, parsley, salt and pepper and rice. Mix to combine. Wet your hands to mix and form the mixture into golf ball sized balls. Heat the oil in a skillet and then cook the meatballs in batches. They should be slightly golden and crusty on the outside. Set aside on a plate.

In a stock pot, combine the tomato mixture and beef stock. Heat to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Add the carrots and cabbage. Add the meatballs to the soup, cover and cook at a simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Ladle the soup into 4 bowls and top with the diced avocado, celery and fresh tomato. Serves 4.

Submitted by Angie Macelroy
Southfield, Mich.

Crock Pot Sweet And Sour Meatballs

- ❑ 1 can pineapple chunks in juice
- ❑ 1 green bell pepper, cut into chunks
- ❑ 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- ❑ 1/2 cup brown sugar
- ❑ 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- ❑ 2 tbsp. soy sauce
- ❑ 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- ❑ 1 lb. ground beef or chicken

Roll the beef into golf ball size balls. Place them on cookie sheet and set them aside. Pour pineapple chunks with juice into a saucepan. Stir in green bell pepper, water chestnuts, brown sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce and lemon juice until sugar and cornstarch dissolve. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cook and stir until thickened, about 10 minutes. Place meatballs into a crock pot. Pour pineapple mixture over meatballs. Cook on medium for 3 hours. Serves 4 over rice.

Thai Turkey Meatballs With Peanut Sauce

- ❑ 1 1/2 lb. ground turkey
- ❑ 1 heaping tbsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 2 in. fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- ❑ 2 jalapeño chilies, seeded and minced (you can use 1/2 a red bell pepper instead)
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sesame oil
- ❑ 1/2 cup peanut butter
- ❑ 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- ❑ 1 tbp. ketchup
- ❑ 2 tbsp. oil
- ❑ 1/2 cup hot water
- ❑ salt and pepper

To make the dipping sauce, combine the peanut butter, soy sauce, ketchup and 1/2 cup hot water in a bowl. Whisk until smooth.

In a mixing bowl combine the turkey, garlic, ginger, chili pepper, basil, egg, and pinch of salt and pepper. Mix to combine. Shape the mixture into 1-1/2-inch balls. In a skillet, heat the oil. Cook the meatballs, turning as they cook. They can burn, so watch and turn them frequently for 10 to 15 minutes and they should be done. Serve immediately with the dipping sauce. Serves 4. ■

What's New

NOV. 20 - NOV. 27

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 20

JEWS OF ETHIOPIA
Judi Oron, author of *Cry of the Giraffe,* discusses "The Jews of Ethiopia," 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

BOOKS AND BISCOTTI
Elaine Newton reviews *All the Light We Cannot See* by **Anthony Doerr.** Dessert at 1 p.m., review at 1:30 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $10.

BEST JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews *American Post-Judaism, Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* by **Shaul Magid,** 7:30 p.m. Beth Tzedek Synagogue.

Friday, Nov. 21

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE
Rabbi Yonason Sacks is the scholar in residence this weekend at Beth Avraham Yosef Synagogue of Toronto. He will discuss "Ratzon HaTorah: Beyond the Taryag Mitzvos."

Saturday, Nov. 22

SOCK HOP
Na'amat Toronto Clubs Dayan, Ilana and Tamar hold a Sock Hop, Bialik Hebrew Day School, 2760 Bathurst St. Tickets $36/$40. Call 416-636-5425 or naamattoronto.com.

HERZL
Derek Penslar discusses "Theodor Herzl: Man of letters and modern-day prophet," 1:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation.

OFF THE CHARTS CONCERT
Alex Saslove and **Justin Raisbeck** perform their "Off the Charts Concert," 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion. $20/$25. For tickets, 905-889-2252 or claudiagriner@templeharzion.com.

Sunday, Nov. 23

THE NEW MOON
Aviva Chernick leads a Rosh Chodesh celebration with song and contemplation, 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. RSVP at www.bethsholom.net.

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 4 is Nov. 24. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

The Rescue

A film about José Arturo Castellanos, former consul general of El Salvador in Geneva who saved thousands of lives during the Holocaust by issuing visas and nationality papers, was shown recently to Na'amat members and guests in Toronto. *The Rescue* was made by his grandsons, Boris and Alvaro Castellanos. From left: Boris Castellanos; Gerry Anklewicz, president of Na'amat Toronto; Alvaro Castellanos and Roni Maderer, vice-president of Na'amat Toronto.

MOLLIE ROTHMAN PHOTO

NUTRITION AND YOUR BRAIN
Dr. Carol Greenwood discusses "Nutrition, vitality and your brain," 11:30 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. Brunch and talk, $10.

HIDDEN CHILD SURVIVOR
Leah Kaufman discusses her experiences as a hidden child survivor of the Holocaust, 8 p.m., Aish Thornhill Community Shul, 949 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill.

ART & GENEALOGY WORKSHOPS
Shaar Shalom Synagogue offers a holistic art workshop, 12:30 p.m. $15/$25. A genealogy workshop is offered at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 24

FILMS BEFORE THE BLACKLIST
Stuart Hands looks at Jewish films before the blacklist. Tonight, *Marked Woman,* 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

SHAARE ZEDEK FUNDRAISER
Senator Linda Frum is honoured at Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation's "From the Heart" event. Former governor **Jeb Bush** is the guest speaker, Beth Torah Congregation. For tickets, call 416-781-3584 or www.fromtheheartsz.ca.

TORAH AND SUSHI
Rabbi Micah Streiffer discusses Pirkei Avot at Sano Sushi, 8143 Yonge St., noon. RSVP rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca.

UNWORTHY CREATURE
Aruna Papp and **Barbara Kay** discuss their book *Unworthy Creature* about "honour killing," 7:30 p.m., Leo Baeck Day School, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill. $30. Presented by Canadian Hadassa-Wizo. For tickets, call 416-630-8373 or HatikvahChapter@hotmail.com.

RAISING RESPONSIBLE KIDS
Dr. Allen Mendler discusses "Keys to raising responsible kids," 7:30 p.m., Leo Baeck Day School, South campus, 501 Arlington Ave. RSVP info@leobaeck.ca.

Tuesday, Nov. 25

LUNCH AND LEARN
Marilyn Herbert reviews *A Guide to the Perplexed* by **Dara Horn,** 12:15 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. $20. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH STITCH BY STITCH
Temma Gentles combines learning about the Stitch by Stitch project with hands-on work, Tuesdays, Nov. 25- Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

BOOK REVIEW
Naomi Wittlin reviews *American Dervish* by **Akhtar Ayaad,** 8 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. $10/$15. For more information, **Beverley** 416-499-6920.

FRONTRUNNERS
The film *Niigaanibatowaad: FrontRunners,* about Aboriginal runners who carried the torch to the 1967 PanAm games in Winnipeg but were denied entry to the stadium will be shown at Temple Sinai, 7 p.m. Two of the original frontrunners and the playwright will be guest speakers.

SICK IS NOT WEAK
Sports television personality **Michael Landsberg** discusses his personal experiences with mental illness, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. No charge.

Wednesday, Nov. 26

REEL AND SPIEL
Beth Emeth Synagogue shows the film *Crossing Delancey* with introduction by **Bruria Cooperman,** 7 p.m. $5.

ONE-ARMED WARRIOR
IDF squad commander **Izzy Ezagui** who lost his dominant arm in combat in 2011 and returned to fight, speaks at Chabad of Markham, 8 p.m. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Thursday, Nov. 27

MAIMONIDES AND HALEVI
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl discusses "Maimonides and Halevi: Convenant, conversion and who is a Jew," 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion.

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews *The Origins of Jewish Self Hatred,* by **Paul Reiter,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

YOUR DNA IS NOT DESTINY
Dr. Jennifer Pearlman discusses "Your DNA is not your destiny," 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. $10/$15.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m.
Call 416-649-1688.

VISION IMPAIRED CLUB
The VIP Club (Vision Impaired Persons) club is celebrating Chanukah **Dec. 1**, 7:30 p.m. at the Bernard Betel Centre, 1002 Steeles Ave. W. with music and a dinner. $18/$21. RSVP **Bess** 905-508-2892.

SMALL WONDERS
Small Wonders, which supports Jewish couples experiencing infertility, is hosting "A Night of Wonder" at Holt Renfrew, 50 Bloor St. E., **Dec. 8**. For tickets, visit smallwonders.ca or 416-742-0090.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: A 4-session group for parents. Call for pre-group assessment. Starts Nov. 20, 7 p.m.
- Beyond the chuppah, becoming a couple: A 2-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Nov. 23 and Nov. 30, 11 a.m., Adath Israel Synagogue.
- Demystifying Alzheimers and dementia: A workshop for anyone wanting to learn about dementia. Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Mystery author **Howard Shrier** discusses his books, Nov. 27, 11 a.m., followed by a program on "Klezmer in the new world." Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Pickleball, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colin@mnjcc.org.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 25, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "The making of *Fiddler on the Roof*," 10 a.m.; Nov. 26, Retirement fair, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Nov. 27, lecture on back pain, 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah with live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Dec. 10; Seniors balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Association of Jewish Seniors**. **Jack Pinkus** discusses "Safe medication use." Nov. 20. Breakfast at 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Ave. Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Stroke recovery and Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:15 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** examines how psychotherapy is depicted in movies and on television, Wednesdays Dec. 3-17, 1 p.m.
- **Leon Soriano** teaches acrylic painting, starting Jan. 13, 10:30 a.m.
- Learn to play bridge, starts Jan. 19, 10 a.m.
- Yiddish group meets Mondays at 1:30 p.m. for good conversation.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles. Nov. 24, "Fixing a hole: The seeds of breakup," 7 p.m.
- **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Klezmer in the New World," Nov. 20 and Nov. 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Adult education about Shabbat, led by **Annie Matan,** Nov. 30, 9:30 a.m.
- Teen time. A program for kids in grades 7-8, sponsored by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Nov. 23, 1 p.m.; KatKa Team for children in grades 2-6, Nov. 30, 1 p.m. Email Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- *Collective Memories* by **Peter Barelkowski** is in the gallery until Nov. 30.
- **Will Stroet,** star of CBC's *Will's Jams* performs Nov. 30, 11 a.m. For tickets, www.algreentheatre.ca or 604-727-4413.
- Israeli family Kabalat Shabbat, Nov. 28, 5:30 -7:30 p.m. $10 for adults, kids free.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/ Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Beginner mah-jong starts Jan. 13.
- Learn to play bridge, starts Feb. 5.
- Class on Experimental Mix Media starts Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
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When the mighty fall

Lauren Kramer

I'm an avid fan of CBC Radio and until recently the melodic voice of Jian Ghomeshi would waft into my car as I'd settle into a long drive. The stress of traffic delays, lousy weather and bad drivers would melt away over the course of Ghomeshi's interviews with interesting personalities. His questions were gently prodding, intelligent, reflective and informed. As a listener, it seemed he loved his work and that his interview subjects were thrilled to be in his company.

So like most other Ghomeshi fans, I was stunned last month when allegations about his sexual violence were revealed. The testimonies were so far removed from the man whose voice comforted me over the sound waves. The Ghomeshi described by the alleged victims of his abuse was rough, disrespectful, egomaniacal and sexually deviant. The man whose voice I thought I knew was smart, kind and polite. I keep wondering: how could the two be so far apart?

In Washington D.C., those who attended Rabbi Barry Freundel's sermons have been shocked by a similar disconnect. The man who preached against pornography and sexual deviance and supposedly upheld the highest standards of kashrut and general Jewish law was caught in the act of voyeurism with a $250 alarm-clock camera. Though not violent, his betrayal was a total violation of privacy, an intrusion into his female congregants' most private moments. And this from a man who was known for dismissing rabbis he believed were his intellectual inferiors.

There's something spitefully satisfying about seeing the mighty when they've fallen, those individuals who've established themselves in lofty, high places where they had so much respect and approval from their audiences that they considered themselves safe from public scrutiny. Safe enough to release their *yetzer hara*, their evil inclinations, without fear of reprisal. In the cases of both Rabbi Freundel and Ghomeshi, those inclinations may be traced back several years, a long pattern of deviance that left many silent questioners, but no one brave enough to come forward with allegations until October 2014.

We all have secrets we think are safe from others, shadows from our past we'd rather forget than highlight. They're our personal character lapses, moments we've been dishonest or unkind in our relationships, incidents we'd rather blot out so we can focus on how far we've come since then and how much better a person we are today. Were we in the limelight occupied by public personas like Rob Ford, Jian Ghomeshi or Barry Freundel, perhaps some of those flaws and weaknesses would become public knowledge, as skeletons from our past collected to speak of those wrongdoings and together made a case against us. It's a disconcerting thought. What would they say? How would their words reflect on the upright individual we've strived to become?

Most of us will never know because we neither preach moral rectitude like Rabbi Freundel did, nor do we occupy a position like Ghomeshi's, until recently the "star" and public face of CBC Radio. I'm not suggesting we pity these men for the mess in which they've ensnared themselves, an apparent lengthy web of lies and cover-ups that have finally come to light. But perhaps the smug satisfaction we get from witnessing their fall from glory is wrong, too

Like us, they're just very flawed people who happen to be in public places where we expect more from them. Are those expectations unreasonable? In our Jewish congregations, how many rabbis are hiding secrets behind the moral rectitude they preach, the "I'm-too-holy-to-warrant-any-investigation" aura they exude?

"The lack of sexual morality that pervades this society is all over the place and the Orthodox community is not immune from this," Rabbi Freundel told the *Washington Jewish Week* last month. Who knew he was speaking about his own alleged weaknesses? "I have always operated on the principle of doing my best to maintain a dignity and a commitment to openness and truth," Ghomeshi wrote Oct. 26, in a lengthy Facebook posting. Maybe his best just wasn't good enough.

Or maybe our expectations are just way out of whack. At any rate, the two men have a lot in common. They're both deeply flawed individuals, and they both thought they could get away with their allegedly bad behaviour. ■

SeeJN | Kids remember

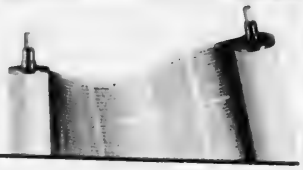
The children at the Thomas and Marjorie Schwartz Preschool Centre participated in a Remembrance Day ceremony at the Miles Nadal JCC. They sang *Heenay Matov*, a song about living in peace, to the veterans, in Hebrew, English and French, and they presented them with poppies they had painted. Pictured, are World War II veteran Max Dankner with preschoolers Caleb Perlis and Khloe Berenbaum.

Recalling the fallen

On Remembrance Day, Jewish war veteran Alan Simons placed a wreath at the cenotaph at Toronto's Old City Hall on behalf of Jewish War Veterans of Canada, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Parshah

Toldot | Genesis 25:19 - 28:9



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier contemplates the challenges of spousal communication
Rabbi Denise Handlarski says Rebecca's story reminds us of the power of mothers
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen exhibits further proof that Judaism thrives against all odds

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Rebecca is a woman of words and action. She offers Abraham's servant water, and she draws water for his camels. She challenges her family and leaves home for Canaan. She talks to God when her pregnancy is difficult. She convinces her son Jacob to take Esau's blessing, and she devises a plan to make it happen.

Clearly, Rebecca is comfortable articulating her thoughts. She makes an emotional plea to Isaac about the terrible choice of wives for their son Jacob. Perhaps this is a way to send Jacob away from his brother Esau (and perhaps this is also to ensure that Jacob's marriage will be better than her own). However, Rebecca speaks to her husband only this one time. Why does she have difficulty communicating with Isaac?

Their first encounter can be seen as a foreshadowing of their relationship. Upon arrival from Haran, Rebecca sees a man approaching – she is so taken by him that she falls off her camel! She then learns that this man is indeed her future husband, and she immediately covers herself with a veil.

According to Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (19th-century Germany), this moment sets the tone for their future relationship. Rebecca sees something in Isaac that is overwhelming and unusual. She feels unworthy and she covers up, hiding from him and establishing a distance that will persist throughout their marriage.

Tragically, Rebecca – the great communicator – cannot communicate with her husband. Her veil symbolically shields her from Isaac. Perhaps she is afraid of all that he has experienced, in particular being bound on the altar by his father; perhaps she is afraid that she will never understand or know him.

In our relationships as well, we seek to remove the veils of misunderstanding, and we learn from our matriarchs and patriarchs the challenges and benefits of effective spousal communication. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

In Toldot, the matriarchal figure Rebecca, like Sarah before her, is infertile. Once she does conceive, the text says that "the children struggled in her womb," (25:19) which causes her to ask God why does she live/exist? (25: 22).

This question strikes me as crucial to the experience of being a woman. Not all women choose to become mothers, but many who do find that it can be a struggle. I know many women who have had trouble conceiving, and I know that this can cut at the core of how we see ourselves in the world. If I cannot become a parent as I had planned, then why do I exist? Of course, the existential question is a challenge that we all must answer as we endeavour to make meaning of our lives.

Rebecca's children, Jacob and Esau, represent many things – from sibling rivalry to the politics of inheritance to conflict between nations. Their story is fraught and fascinating. They jockey for their father's love and his blessing. Jacob tricks Isaac into blessing him instead of his elder brother.

It is Rebecca who orchestrates the ruse, for she believes Jacob is the better choice for continuing the line and fulfilling the Abrahamic promise. Many commentaries focus on how Isaac could be so easily tricked, and on the relationship between the brothers.

But it behooves us to remember Rebecca and the role she plays. This parshah begins with the theme of motherhood. Rebecca is matriarch not only to her family, but to the generations and nations that spring from them. Her invisible hand in the events of the story reminds us of the invisible hands of generations of women who are not recognized but who were instrumental in the unfolding of events in our families and communities. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

Parshat Toldot begins with the verse stating that Isaac was the offspring of Abraham.

We are told that the birth of Isaac was a miracle and above nature, because of Abraham and Sarah's ripe old age. This is indeed the Jewish People's story – we are a miracle, above nature and above reason.

We exist and we thrive against all odds.

Let us recognize the miracles of God's hand in our own life.

There were miracles in Israel this past summer – with God watching over us, we saw more than 3,000 rockets shot at us, but hardly any casualties. And we experience a miracle in just being outside, seeing the leaves change colours and God's beautiful world.

Our forefather Abraham taught us to recognize God in our life. He taught us not to be afraid of the world, but to be in the world itself and to be an example to all. The whole world was against him, yet he never lost his faith in God, and even influenced the world.

So it is too with us. There are many challenges we face, yet we know that God is watching over us. Let us study more Torah and do more mitzvot to increase God's blessing to us.

Abraham had an open tent and was hospitable to all people. He taught them to thank God for everything. And God blessed Abraham with wealth, because he gave charity, so let us give more charity to good causes.

When we put on kosher tfillin, and we light Shabbat candles, as we saw with the recent wonderful Shabbat Project, it helps us and our friends in Israel live in true unity.

Surely all this causes our Father in heaven much joy and naches, and with God's help, as all these mitzvot from all generations accumulate, He will reward us by sending the Mashiach in our day. Amen! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is rabbi of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto.

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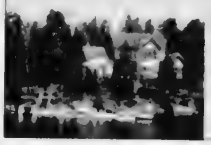

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Wiretap host to discuss modern spirituality

ILAN MESTER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jonathan Goldstein has covered an endless range of topics and stories on the airwaves.

Fans have come to love radio host and novelist Jonathan Goldstein for a few reasons, mainly his unpredictable nature and his unique sense of humour. Both of those attributes were on display in a recent interview with *The CJN*, where the CBC host of *Wiretap* discussed everything from the greatest voice mail of all time to the golden age of podcasts.

His offbeat sense of humour will also be on display in Toronto this week when Goldstein will participate in a special program at the Koffler Gallery called *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jonathan Goldstein!* The afternoon event, co-hosted with the Art Gallery of Ontario's Georgiana Uhlyarik, will include a brief tour of the gallery's current exhibition followed by a reading with Goldstein and a discussion about spirituality from a modern day perspective.

It's a topic that Goldstein knows a thing or two about; he re-imagined some of the most famous biblical stories (in his signature funny way) for his 2009 book, *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible!*.

"Those were the first stories that I had ever really learned when I was a kid taking free Hebrew classes and bar mitzvah lessons and Bible study classes," he shares. "I guess I just wanted to revisit them and spend some time with them again."

It's safe to say Goldstein has experienced a successful run as a novelist and print journalist. The Canadian National Magazine award winner for humour has worked both in print and broadcast, but says the way he writes lends itself more to broadcast.

"My first book (*Lenny Bruce is Dead*) was in more of a private voice, I guess you could say," he adds. "What people have called an experimental kind of book that was fragmented and I guess the voice was just more personal and weirder in a way. Some people will get it and some people won't, and that's OK. Whereas with the kind of radio that I do, the challenge is to be inclusive and speak in a voice that allows as many people as possible to tune in."

Goldstein says he's happy with how *WireTap*, now in its 11th season, has evolved. "As it goes on I guess you start to figure it out in a different way," he says. "You start to think about it as an entity that you're building to endure. So what that means is you become more of a long-distance runner as opposed to a sprinter. And you begin to figure out elements that people really enjoy and want to reoccur and you try to give them those things."

At the same time, he thinks it's important to keep things fresh. "I'm happy that 10, 11 years in I'm still able to do things that feel new and excite me," he says.

Goldstein has covered an endless range of topics and stories on the airwaves, but one of his all-time favourites remains a story called *The Little Mermaid*, about the most epic voice mail of all time. The radio host adds that a story idea can pop into his head at any given time, which is why he always keeps his iPhone handy.

"I write down a lot of ideas and most of them are terrible and I don't end up using," he admits. "But I write them down anyway because sometimes there's a weird democracy to these things; like the ones that just seem dumb turn out to be good and the ones that you think are so great and you wake up in the middle of the night to write down turn out to be not."

Goldstein says now is a great time for aspiring broadcasters to try their hand at storytelling via radio. He references a *New York Magazine* story that claims we're living in the golden age of podcasting.

"Radio has always been a very cheap medium to produce, but now the means of distribution are more accessible," he explains. "If you do it you could put it out there and if it's good it's gonna get noticed. You can look at the iTunes podcasting charts, you see a lot of shows that come out with bigger budgets and bigger staffs from radio stations alongside of the podcasts that are being produced in peoples' basements – just themselves on a microphone."

His advice is simple: don't think about it too much and just put something out there. "A project is a thing in the world and it could evolve and change and you could change with it," he says. ■

The "pay what you can" event is at the Koffler Gallery Art Gallery Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Toronto, Nov. 23 at 2 p.m.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 20, 2014

Sindi Kachuck: Canadian Young Judaea 'made me the person I am today'

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Founded in 1917, Canadian Young Judaea (CYJ) is the country's largest Jewish youth movement. It aims to strengthen its members' Jewish and Zionist identity through year-round programs and summer camps including Camp Shalom, Camp Kadimah and Camp Solelim.

Sindi Kachuck, a 47-year-old CYJ alum and a volunteer on the board since 2008, was recently named the organization's new chair of the board, replacing Phil Ber, who held that position for the past 20 years.

Kachuck spoke to *The CJN* about her deep connection to the organization and the State of Israel, and about her determination to spread the word that CYJ is alive and kicking.

From left: Fern Kachuck, Mark Kachuck, Sindi Kachuch and Marissa Kachuck

How do you think your summers spent at CYJ camps shaped you over the years?

It completely made me the person I am today. There is no question about that. It gave me my connection to the Jewish community. We were a family that went to synagogue, and I didn't participate in synagogue youth programs, but I did participate in CYJ youth programs throughout my years. It gave me my best friends, it gave me my love for Israel and my interest in knowing what goes on in Israel. I spent a year at Hebrew University [in Jerusalem] because of it… It is so hard to express. It definitely made me a better leader… it certainly kept me connected to my Jewish identity.

There is an underlying theme to what we do, and there is a mission involved, there is a vision for what CYJ does and it very much became a part of my story, to who I was going to be in life, to who I am because of it. The connection is incredible. I meet people all the time, and maybe I haven't seen them in years, but you have that connection always.

Has the mandate or mission of CYJ evolved over the years?

Our vision today is keeping kids Jewish, with a love and connection to Israel. When I was young, we were very staunchly a Zionist youth movement. We're still a Zionist youth movement, but in those days, you talked about aliyah. That was the ultimate – to make aliyah, and we have a lot of CYJ alumni who are living in Israel. But it has changed, because obviously, times have changed. If kids want to make aliyah, I mean, amazing, we've done a great job. But really, right now what we to look at is keeping them connected to the Jewish community so that they stay Jewish, and giving them that love for Israel so that they feel the connection, want to visit, want to spend more time there.

Do you think the concept of Zionism is different today than it was when you were young?

When I was a camper 30 to 35 years ago, Israel was only about 30 years old and we were only about 30 years out of the Holocaust, so there was a different feeling. And it was still a country being built and there was still that pioneer, chalutz kind of feeling about Israel. So I think, just as Israel has evolved, so has our Zionism. So for many, it is still about aliyah, but I think it is also about feeling good about your support for Israel and feeling connected to what Israel is. You don't always have to agree, but you do have an interest and connection to it.

> *Just as Israel has evolved, so has our Zionism. For many it is still about aliyah, but I think it is also about feeling good about your support for Israel and feeling connected to what Israel is.*

Why is it important to have a connection to Israel in order to maintain a Jewish identity?

I think they exist together. I don't think there is just Israel or there is just a Diaspora. I think Israel is our home. It is the Jewish state, and we shouldn't only think of it when we need it. It should be something that is part of our lives. It has to be.

For me personally, there is no separation. A part of being Jewish is recognizing Israel, understanding Israel, wanting to go to Israel, or to have it, at least, as part of your conversation. Even if you're not a person who is going to end up spending a lot of time in Israel, the Jewish People now do not exist without Israel and I don't think the State of Israel exists without the Jewish People. That's my personal feeling.

I have three kids, and they are all CYJ involved. My oldest is 21 and she works for CYJ during the year. She is program director of the senior programs and she is going into her fifth year as staff at Camp Solelim. My son is 19 and in Montreal, and he is going into his third year as staff at Solelim and is coming in this weekend for Mifgash, the annual retreat we have to bring kids together again after two months of not being at camp… My youngest is 17. She was in Israel this past summer [for CYJ's Biluim Israel Program] during everything that was going on. She had a phenomenal time… She's hoping to be staff next summer at one of her camps.

Do you have specific ambitions for the organization as you take on this new role?

I'd like to get more volunteer involvement, to let more people know about what we do and that we are going strong. We have a ton of kids coming to programs, we have over 40 kids coming to a program called JOLT, which is the Jewish Outreach Leadership Training, and this is where kids get the opportunity to do a little bit of tikkun olam. They learn about different charities they want to support, they learn about Israel and charities in Israel.

A large part of what we do to in order to keep kids connected to our movement and our camps, which keeps them Jewish, is to fundraise for our Canadian Young Judaea Scholarship Fund to support those in need and ensure they are not turned away from our camps for financial reasons.

My vision is to make sure that it continues and that CYJ's legacy keeps going and we go beyond 120 years. We're approaching our 100th anniversary soon in 2017. [I also want to] reconnect alumni who haven't been connected in years and make sure that from the time they leave camp as staff, we don't lose them until they have kids and need a place to send their kids. We want to keep that connection. Even though it is a youth movement, it is still fuelled by keeping us in the profile – people seeing what we're doing and continuing to attract more kids to our summer camps.

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to give back to CYJ and look forward to working with our board and professional staff to see our vision being realized and keep CYJ in the hearts and minds of all of our alumni, and of course, our current young members. ■

Canadian history: the good and the bad

Backstory

ALLAN LEVINE

History can be uncomfortable, especially for Canadians, who like to think they are highly evolved, that while Americans, for example, have a long racist history, the multicultural and tolerant Canada does not.

In recent years, more of these darker and controversial issues – such as treatment of First Nations children in residential schools and Canada's refusal to admit German Jewish refugees in the 1930s – have been introduced into high school curricula. Still, ignorance about the way it really was from the earliest days of settlement to well into the 20th century persists.

The tolerant values and attitudes we now hold in high esteem are, in the big picture of Canadian history, a very recent phenomenon. That's why the opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg is an event to be praised.

The museum's exhibits are sure to touch a raw nerve, since by its very sensitive nature, content about Canada's horrific treatment of First Nations, the Holocaust or the Rwanda genocide is personal history tied up with issues of nationalism, legitimate feelings of victimization and marginalization.

In the 1790s, some of the 500 or so citizens of York (Toronto, as of 1834), Upper Canada, owned blacks. This was despite the fact that Upper Canada's first lieutenant governor, John Graves Simcoe, was a vocal opponent. Peter Russell, who served as Simcoe's receiver and auditor general, for instance, was a slave owner, as was William Jarvis, the provincial secretary.

Slavery may have been banned in the British Empire in 1833 – and there was a strong anti-slavery society in Toronto in the 1850s – yet prejudice and discrimination were a constant in Toronto and elsewhere for decades. Until well after World War II, most blacks were not permitted to stay at Toronto hotels. Jobs were hard to come by, even when there was a "Help Wanted" ad displayed in the window of a shop.

In a Canadian society that perceived and cherished itself as white, Anglo and Protestant, the same discriminatory treatment was accorded Irish Catholics and wave after wave of east European and Asian immigrants that followed them. Into the 1950s, non-white and non-Christian immigrants were regarded with trepidation and fear.

In the decade before World War I in particular, Jews, Chinese, Italians, Ukrainians and others were denounced by politicians, church leaders, reformers, physicians, academics and journalists as undesirable, primitive, uncivilized, dirty, immoral and degenerate foreigners who could never assimilate to become "true" Canadians. Such attitudes engendered institutionalized racism for several generations. Anti-Semitism barred Jews from many professions and jobs, clubs and beach resorts.

In 1913, Horace Wing a Chinese merchant in Toronto was arrested and charged with "procuring a white woman for immoral purposes" after he answered a young girl's newspaper advertisement seeking employment as a stenographer. Her parents had given to the police Wing's letter offering their daughter a job.

Provincial governments in Canada, horrified and enlightened by, among other issues, the revelations about the Holocaust and the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 at the United Nations, began to implement anti-discrimination legislation in the 1950s. A federal Bill of Rights followed under John Diefenbaker in 1960.

Attitudes changed much more gradually so that today few Canadians would defend an Ottawa-area company that was recently deemed guilty and ordered to pay $8,000 plus interest by the Ontario's Human Rights Tribunal for telling a foreign-born applicant that it "only hires white men." At one time, that would have been the standard. Now, it is illegal and considered offensive by the majority.

Prejudice and discrimination will never completely vanish in Canada – it is the unfortunate way human beings are hardwired. But education and reflection are the key, and the CMHR's positive contribution to this significant national debate can only help. ■

Allan Levine's most recent books are Toronto: Biography of a City and Miracle at the Forks: The Museum That Dares Make A Difference (co-authored with Peter C. Newman).

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

The unveiling of a monument to the beloved memory of
MARGIT SARA SCHONBERGER ע"נ
will take place
Sunday, November 30 at 12:00 p.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
986 Wilson Ave., Toronto, ON
Pride of Israel Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Dr. Solomon David Coleman,
better known as David, passed away peacefully in London, UK on Tuesday 28th October aged 94. A loving father now sadly missed by his surviving children, Claudette, Patsy and Leslie, brother Michael, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, extended family and all his friends.

To place an UNVEILING NOTICE please call or email at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling.
416-922-3605
or email
ssokolsky@thecjnsales.com

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Victor Istrati	Nov 1/14	25 Wiggens Court
Edith Steinhart	Nov 1/14	139 Bannockburn Ave.
Sam Heller	Nov 1/14	484 Steeles Ave. West
Paul Rummell	Nov 2/14	17 Newbury Lane
Mynne Zuckerman	Nov 3/14	1166 Bay Street, # 1202
Samuel Rose	Nov 2/14	11 Carhartt Street
Sara Cohen	Nov 6/14	18 Steelee Ave. West
Mayya Shavishvili	Oct 20/14	3 Dove Hawk Way
Louis Rosenblat	Nov 7/14	121 Dell Park Ave.
Muriel Silver	Nov 7/14	2 Neptune Drive
Ruth Lazarus	Nov 7/14	32 Dell Park Ave.
Miriam (Bubbles) Bookman	Nov 7/14	3560 Bathurst St.

HEBREW BASIC

Moshe Morris Erlich
Oct 30/14
8 Covington Road

Dan Gayer
Oct 31/14
2195 Jane Street

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Pastein, Gloria Gussie	Oct. 22, 2014	7601 Bathurst St
Pottens, Albert	Oct. 22, 2014	3560 Bathurst St
Doron, Maurice	Oct. 22, 2014	56 Chopin Blvd
Budilovsky, Boris	Oct. 23, 2014	Private
Najnudel, Jaime	Oct. 23, 2014	3560 Bathurst St
Rose, Sandra	Oct. 24, 2014	149 John Westway
Haber, Pearl	Oct. 24, 2014	Private
Shubits, Braina	Oct. 24, 2014	Private
Saunders, Sylvia	Oct. 24, 2014	65 Spring Garden Ave
Koff, Eleanor Margaret	Oct. 24, 2014	1131 Steeles Ave W.
Waisglass, Harry Jacob	Oct. 25, 2014	Private
James, Helen	Oct. 25, 2014	24 Verwood Ave
Smith, Philip	Oct. 25, 2014	705 King St. W
Tishkovsky, Lev	Oct. 26, 2014	Private
Kats, Sofya	Oct. 27, 2014	6101 Bathurst St
Geller, Mitchell	Oct. 27, 2014	Private
Wajnkranc, Minnie	Oct. 28, 2014	343 Clark Ave W
Waltman, Morris Jack	Oct. 29, 2014	850 Steeles W
Anidjar , Mercedes	Oct. 29, 2014	485 Patricia Ave
Halt, Yakov	Oct. 29, 2014	Private
Vardi-Starer, Ashley	Oct. 31, 2014	94 Winding Lane
Papoff, Ruth Elaine	Nov. 1, 2014	5 Emerald Lane
Watkin, Sarah Renee	Nov. 2, 2014	88 Carl Tennan St
Springer, Henry	Nov. 3, 2014	219 Honiton St
Karpov, Ninel	Nov. 3, 2014	Private
Pekar, Yakov	Nov. 3, 2014	3 Goldfinch Crt
Altman, Gerald	Nov. 4, 2014	4001 Bayview Ave
Gordon, Minnie	Nov. 4, 2014	307 Woodbrook Mews SW
Mandel, Howard Ian	Nov. 5, 2014	135 Antibes Dr
Guttman, Izzie	Nov. 6, 2014	Private
Hecker, Henry Robert	Nov. 6, 2014	7 Gale Cres
Yanofsky, Abert	Nov. 6, 2014	90 Fisherville Rd.
Goldmacher, Clare	Nov. 7, 2014	11 Townsgate Dr
Meyers, Stanley	Nov. 7, 2014	Private
Drillick, Marion	Nov. 7, 2014	Private
Gelb, Terezia	Nov. 8, 2014	Private
Kaushansky, Chaya Mushka	Nov. 8, 2014	18 Mortimer Crt
Polson, Daully	Nov. 8, 2014	25 Brunswick Ave
Walton, Dorothy	Nov. 8, 2014	120 Promenade Cir.
Rypina, Nina	Nov. 9, 2014	Private
Teyer, Icheskal	Nov. 9, 2014	7001 Bathurst St
Hellinger, Irena	Nov. 9, 2014	110 Promenade Cir.
Erdman, George	Nov. 10, 2014	Private
Press, Lyudmyla	Nov. 10, 2014	850 Steeles Ave W

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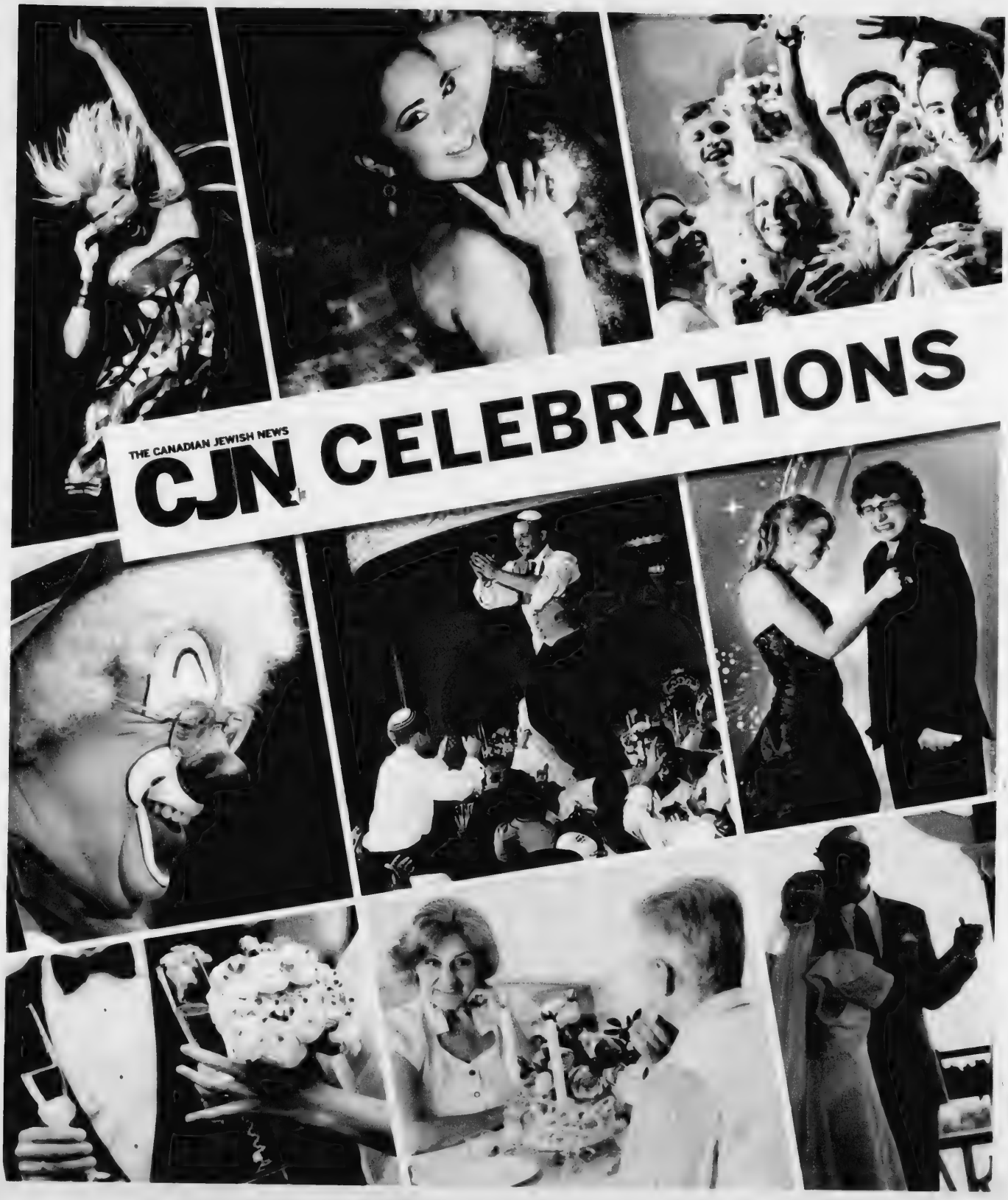
THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN CELEBRATIONS

One-stop wedding planning at **Marriott Yorkville**

CAROLYN BLACKMAN
cblackman@thecjn.ca

You're in great hands when you book a simchah at Toronto Marriott Bloor Yorkville Hotel (416-961-8000), says Alicia Bodanis, director of sales and marketing.

"Our certified event planners help to ensure flawless events."

Each planner has completed coursework, she says, and is qualified to co-ordinate weddings of all types.

"They can help you determine an overall vision for your wedding and help you execute each detail. That includes setting an event budget, deciding on a menu, arranging table settings, and finding florists, photographers, a band and other entertainment for the big day."

What this means, she says, "is that you can walk in the door or give us a call, and the planning begins. It is a one-stop event. Our team takes care of you from start to finish. We can save you many hours of work."

Bodanis says that with the hotel's brand new function space, there are now 12,000 square feet of entertainment space available in nine rooms.

"You can host an intimate ceremony or a grand Yorkville dinner-dance for up to 250 people. Valet parking is available at reasonable prices for all the guests."

Forest Hill Ballroom

Crisp, white table linen is provided, and there are bud vases or candle centrepieces available. "When we say nothing extra needs to be done, we mean it," she stresses.

For those who want their own touch, however, the hotel is connected to many outside decorators, and is happy to work with others. "We want to make your party the way you want it. You decide what's important to you, and we help you accordingly."

Kosher food is provided by an outside provider she says, and for non-kosher meals, customized menus are prepared by Michael Picken, executive chef and director of food and beverages, who has worked in luxury hotels all over the world including in Scotland and in Australia.

"He meets with all clients personally to plan whatever type of meal they are looking for," Bodanis says.

Clients can choose plated or buffet dinners, or opt to have reception stations, which include "the farm" with turkey, beef, lamb; "the sea"; and the "market garden," featuring a caesar station, and garden fresh vegetable crudites.

Plated dinners, which are a minimum of three courses, start with salad or soup, such as braised beef barley, fire roasted tomato and pepper or potato leek and fennel. Specialty entrees include roasted Canadian beef prime rib, pan seared halibut, seared Lake Erie trout, or for the vegetarians, Yucatan roasted corn and black bean tart.

Bodanis says she always reminds clients that they are having the event in a four-star hotel, and they are happy to arrange blocks of guest rooms. "We provide special rates for groups in our well-designed and spacious rooms.

"We also offer hospitality suites for our guests, and a two-level bridal suite, complete with French doors."

Prospective hosts and hostesses merely have to make an appointment, and their simchah can be arranged from start to finish. "We're there from the first plan, until the last guest leaves," says Bodanis. ■

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The go-to store for menswear

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Sherri Wolfish took her son, Max, 22, shopping for a suit this summer, she decided to go to Tom's Place, the iconic discount men clothier in Kensington Market (190 Baldwin St.). She didn't know what to expect.

"An older woman assisted us and when I first saw her, I thought what does she know about fitting a kid like Max?" Wolfish recalls. "Turns out the woman was very sharp. She sized him and much to my surprise she knew exactly what kind of suit would work best for him.

"It was an incredibly satisfying shopping experience."

Owner, Tom Mihalik, 58, was pleased to hear Wolfish's positive review of his store. "We have very experienced staff. They understand styles and body types. Here the customer is the king."

For some time, Tom's Place (416-596-0297) has been Toronto's go-to store for well-priced menswear, particularly suits, says Mihalik.

During the year, he also holds several large warehouse sales at the International Centre and at the Miles Nadal JCC (MNJCC).

Mihalik says the value he offers customers is key to his success. "There are some great suits out there for $2,000 or $2,500, but not everybody can afford to spend that kind of money.

"At our store they can get a good suit for $350 to $550. We are very price conscious. We will find you a suit for your budget. We will sell you a good suit at a reasonable price. We only sell suits that are 100 per cent wool."

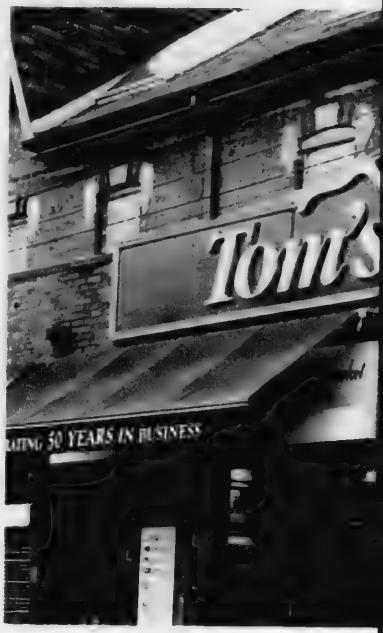
He also sells suits retailing for $250 to $350 for younger men starting careers. "These suits are very well made. You can attend any function in those suits.

"You can't go wrong with a good suit. It's the first thing people see when you go for a job interview. You need to be presentable. A good suit always comes in handy."

Mihalik says many younger men are very stylish. "I have not seen so many young men dressing as nicely as today."

He says a sizeable portion of his stock is geared to younger customers. "We carry a lot of slim-fitting suits. We also understand that not everybody can fit into a slim suit. We have our garments moderately styled and cut to give the illusion of a slim-fitting suit.

"We also carry sweaters, sports jackets and tweedy sports jackets for young men."



Some men in this age range who are more established are looking for high-end suits, says Mihalik. "Luxury brands were introduced in the store because more and more young people are shopping for luxury European brands at affordable prices. Most of these luxury brands are Swedish or Italian."

And he had to expand the store to accommodate the younger generation, he says. "We took over one of the fish stores and we did a major renovation. The footprint is larger now and the layout is much better."

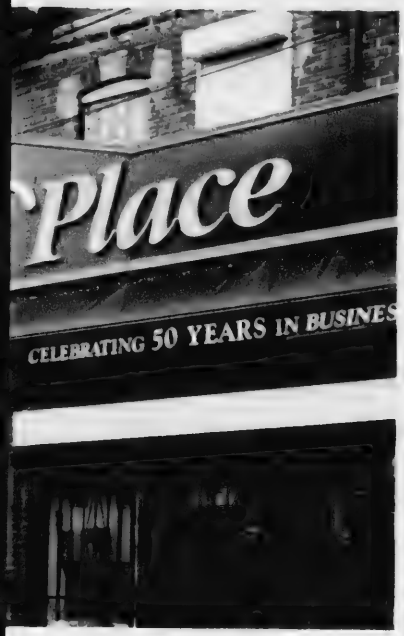
Tom's Place, originally called William's Bargain Store, was founded by his father, William Mihalik, in 1958, shortly after he emigrated from Hungary. Mihalik and his mother left Hungary to join William in 1968, and he soon began helping his father at the store after school and on weekends. "Selling was something in me. I loved doing it."

Mihalik says the business continues to be a family affair. His sister, his wife and his oldest son, Tom Jr., all work at the store and sometimes his two younger sons help out as well.

"My mother worked the last days of her life in the store. She died three years ago."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Tom's Place



Tom Mihalik

Tom gradually converted the merchandise from second hand to discounted, designer lines. Although he sold womenswear for many years, the store is now exclusively a men's clothier shop.

"When our suppliers visit us from other parts of the world, they can't believe the selection of suits we carry. We're second to none.

"We also have the largest selection of shirts and ties of any place in the world."

He notes that this year the big colour is blue. "We sell 50 shades of blue."

The fit of the suits are enhanced by the handiwork of a skilled group of European-trained tailors, some with 20 to 40 and even 50 years of experience, he says. "These traditional tailors will work on a garment from start to finish. They can do any kind of alteration."

Mihalik says Tom's Place is much more than just a business."Selling suits is a big part of our lives. It's an honour to work in the market and be one of the Kensington Market merchants."

He points out that when he first started working in his father's store, Kensington was known as the Jewish market. During his early years in the business, Mihalik was mentored by many of the local Jewish store owners and over time he developed close ties with the Jewish community.

He's been a longtime member of the MNJCC and although he is not Jewish, Mihalik sponsored a stained glass panel in memory of his father in the JCC's Michael Bernstein Chapel.

He is also a supporter of many Jewish charities, among them Mt. Sinai Hospital and Baycrest Centre and he has even been honoured by Chabad.

Mihalik recounts how he brought his good friend, the late Canadian billionaire Ken Thomson, to the Kiever Shul in Kensington Market so that Thomson could learn more about the history of the community from shul president and lifelong neighbourhood resident, Dave Pinkus.

The Jewish shopkeepers in Kensington Market continue to be an inspiration for him, says Mihalik.

"That generation of merchants, we will never again see in our lifetime. They dedicated their lives to their businesses and their families.

"Some of those men – they are in their late 70s and 80s – now stop by the store and they say, 'Tommy we're so proud of you. Look at the business you built.'

"It makes me feel humbled by their respect for what we have accomplished here in Kensington. We have also taken a page from the Jewish immigrant dream to build a business and a family." ■

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William Ashley: your perfect registry partner

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A gift registry offers engaged couples an opportunity to create the perfect wish list for their home.

At William Ashley's 55 Bloor St. W. flagship store (416-964-2900), couples can select from North America's largest selection of tableware, kitchenware and home décor from all the leading, world-renowned brands at Canada's best prices.

"Professional registry consultants work with couples one-on-one in selecting their dinnerware, crystal, flatware and kitchenware, as well as home accessories that will best reflect their combined lifestyle, whether it's modern or traditional," says registry consultant Fatima Pacheco.

"We make the process simple and unique to each couple. Our best kept secret is our Gourmet Shoppe that carries everything for your entertaining needs including small kitchen appliances, trendy gadgets, pots and pans and chef's knives."

Couples can register online or by telephone, where friendly and knowledgeable registry consultants are pleased to assist.

William Ashley's gift notification service informs couples of the gifts that have been purchased and who purchased them, allowing couples to ensure they receive the items that are most important to them.

William Ashley offers delivery across North America and provides couples in the Greater Toronto Area with a complimentary delivery service at their convenience.

Often, not everything a couple wants is purchased from the gift registry. The company provides a registry completion program offering the couple a 10 per cent discount (five per cent in the Gourmet Shoppe) on any outstanding items on their registry for up to one year after their wedding date.

As William Ashley wants to ensure that couples use and enjoy their china and stemware on a daily basis, it provides its unique, complimentary "Everyday Entertaining Insurance." If a piece breaks within the first three years of use, William Ashley will replace it at 50 per cent off the current national suggested retail price or comparable regular value.

William Ashley also provides a full-service stationery boutique.

"In the boutique, we carry Canada's best selection of custom invitations which allows us to provide couples with an exceptional variety of styles and printing techniques for any special occasion," Pacheco says.

"A William Ashley invitation is not just an invitation, it's an expression of your special day."

William Ashley is proud to be Canada's exclusive destination for world-renowned Teuscher Chocolates of Switzerland. Teuscher's handmade chocolates do not contain any preservatives or additives. They are prepared in Zurich, Switzerland, and flown in weekly to arrive fresh for your shower, engagement party, or wedding. Made with the finest ingredients, their signature Dom Perignon Champagne Truffle is world famous.

"Your selection of truffles can be packaged in individual gift boxes with a co-ordinating colour box and ribbon to match your wedding colours. Each ribbon is hand tied as an extra special touch," she says.

Additionally, William Ashley offers complimentary parking in the Manulife Centre with purchase for the couple and their guests. Gifts purchased in store are packaged in William Ashley's signature gold boxes, free of charge.

Since 1947, William Ashley has been bringing "magic to every day and every occasion" by assisting couples to create a gift registry that reflects their unique taste and lifestyle. From unique kitchen essentials to stunning table settings, William Ashley offers all you need to entertain your friends and family in style and create special memories. William Ashley is your best choice for the perfect registry experience. ■

WILLIAM ASHLEY PHOTO

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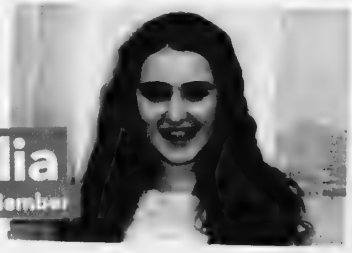
B'nai Tzedek enables teens to establish a tzedakah fund in their own name and support projects and **causes** they care about

Our teens become actively involved in philanthropy and feel good about their role in **improving the world.**

Jacob
B'nai Tzedek Member

"I am [illegible] Bat Yam [illegible] do this because [illegible] something I am **passionate** *about [illegible] with them when I visit Israel with my family."*



Talia
B'nai Tzedek Member

"In lieu of a bat mitzvah gift, I asked my guests to donate to my tzedakah fund, which will support programs that have **personal** *meaning to me - dance and camp."*

Andrew **B'nai Tzedek Alumni**

"B'nai Tzedek has enabled me to learn about the **needs in the community,** *to support important causes and to hold a* **leadership** *position at a young age - now I am confident and proud to be an active member of Jewish life on my University campus."*

To learn more about our participants and to read their stories of impact please visit bnaitzedek.ca/Stories

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Windsor Arms is an ideal setting for any simchah

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A high quality hotel venue with top-notch kosher food?

Such a thing does exist in Toronto.

The Windsor Arms, with fancy hotel rooms and beautiful party space to boot, can provide the ideal match for the Jewish community.

"Our big event space, the Courtyard Cafe, has 50-foot ceilings, limestone walls all the way around, and it's perfect for weddings, celebrations, bar and bat mitzvahs, whatever the special occasion," said Windsor Arms owner, George Friedmann.

"We have kosher and non-kosher options, and we have our own separate kosher kitchen here, where everything is done in-house."

For Friedmann, who bought the Windsor Arms and restored it almost 20 years ago, that is one of the big factors behind the success of the simchahs there.

"When most people are going to do a kosher event, they're usually looking at doing it in a hotel or banquet hall," Friedmann said. "A lot of times, things are subcontracted out to a kosher caterer, and the client has no clue where the food is coming from or what to expect.

"Odds are, the food is being cooked in some warehouse and then being trucked down four, five, or even 12 hours before the function, where it gets reheated."

The Windsor Arms has its own kosher kitchen, a rarity amongst hotels in Toronto.

"You can count them on one hand," said Friedmann with a laugh. "So everyone else is relying on a kosher caterer that isn't a permanent fixture in that hotel or banquet hall."

Another advantage is that the Windsor Arms's kosher kitchen is working consistently during the week, as they serve up fine dining for patrons from Tuesday to Thursday, and in the winter, after Shabbat.

"When people come in here, they don't have to tell us that they're looking at doing an event," Friedmann said. "They can just come in and dine, and then they know what the experience is and what a typical person gets.

"With another hotel or banquet hall that brings in the food, it's almost like luck, because you hope they'll do a good job, but you don't know," Friedmann added. "There's a lot less apprehension and uncertainty when walking into here than a typical banquet hall or hotel, especially one that doesn't have their own kosher kitchen."

There are a few different spots for smaller events at the Windsor Arms, but the Courtyard Cafe is the lone full-sized space, and it comes ready to go.

"This room is designed to function as a restaurant, so it has all the ambience of a dining facility rather than a multi-purpose room," Friedmann said. "It saves the client a lot of money and time."

The Courtyard Cafe can hold cocktail receptions for up to 500 people or sit-down dinners for about 250 individuals (although most dinners are between 150-200 people).

"Since we have only have one banquet

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hall, your event will be the only one going on that day," Friedmann said. "You won't be hearing *Havah Nagilah* coming from the next room while you're trying to do your speeches."

The Windsor Arms has been functioning as a hotel since 1927, and it has been offering up luxurious rooms (at an average of 900 sq. ft.) to heads of state and celebrities.

There are 28 hotel rooms available at the Windsor Arms, with five staff members per every guest suite.

"Sometimes, I have to repeat that three times, because most people say, 'really?'," Friedmann said. "Most hotels are the other way around.

"Whatever the client wants, if it's legal, we can do it and get it done."

The plethora of staff members can come in handy if there's any sort of last-minute emergency with the function at hand.

"One real advantage for us is that, because we're a hotel, we have everything you need here," Friedmann said. "If a bride rips her dress 30 seconds before she's supposed to walk down the aisle, we have a butler on staff that can sew a dress, steam a dress, or provide anything else that's needed." ■

For more information about the Windsor Arms and holding a function there, you can call 416-971-9666 or e-mail them at catering@windsorarmshotel.com.

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Cupido jewelry is new, fresh and unique

DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Shopping mavens living in Kitchener and surrounding areas, will be happy to note that Cupido has expanded with a third store at Fairview Park shopping mall this year.

This mid to high-end priced jewelry and watch store, with locations already in Vaughan Mills and Bayview Village, sells trendy pieces at moderate prices, which make perfect gifts for bat mitzvahs, anniversaries, graduations and other special occasions.

Christiania Patricia, head of marketing and public relations, says, "What we try to do in the store is keep current pieces in each brands collection so that we're always staying on top of everything. We don't have the older products sitting around."

The owners, **Jeff Karadjian and Haigo Derian**, also try to ensure that the necklaces and bracelets they load up on are unique, she says.

"The owners of the store attend jewelry shows where they're able to see products coming from different countries – whatever is new, fresh and unique. They bring in different brands that you don't typically see around. Not your average – you can't get it everywhere," Patricia says.

The most popular brand continues to be Pandora, to the extent that they've opened three stand-alone Pandora stores in **Promenade, Sherway Gardens and Markville shopping centres.**

"Pandora has been one of our biggest brands. It's kind of everywhere and I find the brand is still going strong after so many years," Patricia says. "And what's great is that they continue to keep on trend and really cater to our customers."

Oscar De La Renta necklace
CUPIDO PHOTO

Some new brands at the Kitchener store include Oscar De La Renta, Miss Mimi, Tissot, Breuning and Thomas Sabo.

But the number 1 focus at Cupido is customer service.

"We have built many relationships with our customers, sharing in their joys and sorrows. We can ensure our customers will fall in love with our product," writes Patricia in an email. **"Our goal is ensuring our customers are happy."**■

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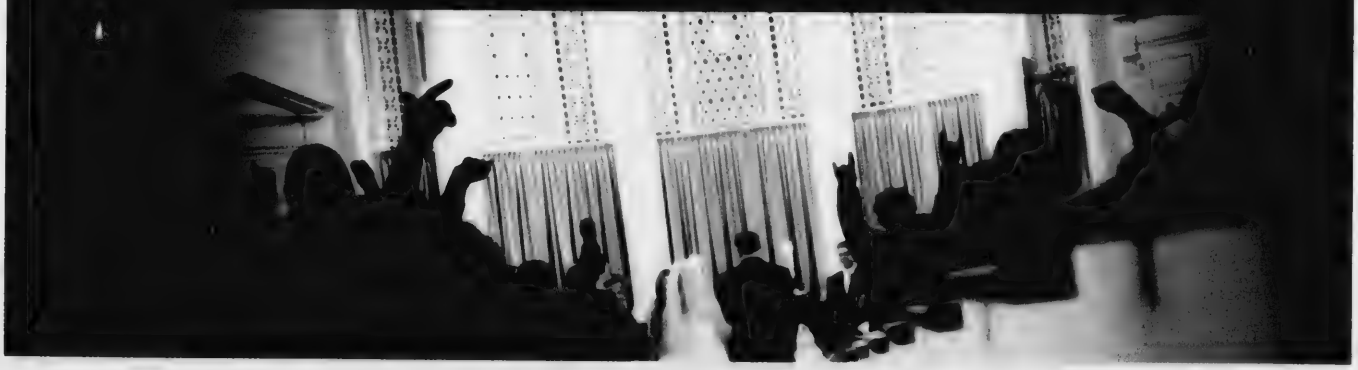

Kosher Caterer offers traditional and ethnic foods

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Gone are the days when the only kosher dining options for weddings and bar/bat mitzvahs were the standard venue food: a few appetizers, a main dish consisting of chicken or beef, and some typical side dishes of rice and potatoes. In fact, that's exactly why Norman Kay, owner and founder of Mitzuyan Kosher Catering (416-419-5260; http://mitzuyankoshercatering.com) decided to open his full-service kosher catering business in 2009.

"I was sick of eating kosher food that tasted like kosher food. I said we can do a lot better than this," said Kay.

Indeed, they can and have. Although they can cook traditional Jewish food, they also offer a variety of ethnic cuisine to tailor to their unique guests.

"We cook all the [typical] Jewish foods you think of, but we also do East Indian food, West Indian, Mexican, all kinds of 'non-kosher' food but we make it kosher," he said. Unlike many other kosher catering companies, they also cook fresh on site.

"We don't cook three days before your event. Typically, if you had an event on Sunday, you'd have to stop cooking on Friday at 2 p.m. so a lot of caterers prep ahead of time and put it in their fridge or freezer and do the final cooking on the day of," said Kay.

"We do all our cooking on the day of, so all our stuff is fresh. We don't buy any ready-made salads, but we make them all ourselves. We have a pastry chef that does the baking." Their mobile kosher kitchen makes it easy for them to pack up, bring all the ingredients needed for your function and head to your event to cook on site.

The niche that Kay saw was definitely real and his hard work has paid off. Mitzuyan is the official kosher caterer for Beth Radom Congregation, The Avenue Banquet Hall (an exclusive single event venue that can hold up to 400 people) and the Boulevard (a single event venue which can accommodate up to 120 people). They're also the preferred kosher caterer at Angus Glen Golf Club, Paramount, Bellagio, The Manor, Spirale, and Hazelton Manor.

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MITZUYAN KOSHER CATERING PHOTOS

Depending on the venue, basic menus start at around $80 per person (including hors d'oeuvres, a main meal and dessert). Usually, the event must consist of a minimum of 50 people (but call to inquire).

In addition to providing world-class catering, Kay also busts some healthy myths and shares recipes on their blog (mitzuyankoshercatering.com).

"A lot of people were asking me for recipes and advice and I figured I might as well put it on the website," said Kay. On the blog, he discusses everything from kosher issues – such as what makes wine kosher and health myths, such as is salami really healthy?

If you're searching for a caterer to prepare a meal based on your own tastes, then Mitzuyan is ready to whip up something for you. "We create menus according to the client's likes and dislikes. You don't have to just have what we have, you can tell us what you like and we'll create it for you. For a recent baseball bar mitzvah theme, we made corn dogs and potato wedges for example," said Kay.

For a multi-cultural wedding merging Russian and Canadian cultures, Mitzuyan tailored the menu to have food representing both cultures. "We're also doing a lot of kosher vegan and vegetarian foods, there's a bigger demand for it now," said Kay. "There are lots of innovative meals we can do." ■

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Destination **bar mitzvah** is an affair to remember

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Over the past few years, elaborate bar and bat mitzvahs have become more commonplace, with families spending thousands of dollars on just one night, complete with expensive music, DJs, dining, and more.

As the bar/bat mitzvah party scene becomes a regular occurrence for today's 12 and 13 year olds, some parents have chosen to find a more unique way to celebrate their children's entrance into Jewish adulthood.

That's what Lori Weiss did when it came time to plan her youngest son's bar mitzvah this past summer. For her last and final bar mitzvah, Weiss, herself in the party business (she runs a centrepiece company called Behind the Scene Creations), decided to find a way to make her son Noah's night different than the usual stream of parties his class was experiencing.

"We spent an exorbitant amount of money on the first one, and it was a beautiful affair, but I felt like I had post-bar mitzvah depression," said Weiss. "The four hours just went by so quickly and then it's over. Even now, when bar mitzvahs are coming up, the kids are like 'another one, another one'? It's all the same repetitive thing."

That's why Weiss decided to make her son's affair a little less traditional and a little more meaningful, by having a destination bar mitzvah in Mexico.

"Instead of having a four-hour bar mitzvah where you've spent $30,000 to $50,000 for four hours, this was probably something that cost less than half of that but we had a week away too – a continuous party for a week."

The family planned a week in Mexico, where her son, Noah, read from the Torah for a Havdalah service on the beach with Rabbi Stephen Spiegel, originally from Florida but who moved to Playa del Carmen, Mexico to perform destination weddings. This was his first destination bar mitzvah. Prior to arriving in Mexico, Noah Skyped the rabbi once a week for a few months to ensure everything would go smoothly.

"It was different than everything else my friends were doing," said Noah. "It wasn't the same old thing as every other bar mitzvah."

The Weiss' were joined by a group of their close family and friends who came to share in their simchah, and each one took part in the bar mitzvah, which made the ceremony even more meaningful.

Weiss said, "When you go to a bar mitzvah here, I find it very cliché, very standard the way rabbis perform the ceremony. The way this rabbi did it was different – he involved every single guest. The way my husband, Joey, and I participated in the service was beautiful – when it came to Noah's tallit, the tallit was in the rabbi's hands, then passed to Joey, and passed to me, and being the mom who brought him into the world, I placed it on him. Our friends opened and closed the ark, and held up the Torah. It was very meaningful," said Weiss.

Although it may seem complicated to plan an affair from another country, Weiss said that it's not as hard as it seems, and is worth the effort. "There's so much available online, or from me if people want help, it's not as difficult as some make it out to be. You just can't expect everyone to come. You do this for immediate family, and everyone else who wants to come is a bonus," she said.

And when all is said and done, you have an affair to truly remember.

"I remember just sitting there, watching him with the water behind him, standing on the bimah on the beach – it was just really special," said Weiss. "I'd definitely do it again." ■

Noah Weiss

Treat your guests to the total package

DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Consider throwing your next big bash at Symposium Café, the upscale and licensed restaurant which has popular locations in Thornhill and at Yonge and Sheppard.

"We have parties every day of the week, because of the attention to detail we provide," says Al Davis, head of marketing at Symposium Café. "We take the worry out of organizing a party."

Symposium is experienced with facilitating a variety of occasions, from large bar mitzvahs and weddings to small going away parties and anniversaries. Many locations have a private room, and they can create a special menu that includes wine lists and desserts.

"We can craft a party to whatever the needs are," Davis says.

The locations are spacious and can accommodate a large number of guests. The managers allow you to bring in your own decorations and even some small foodstuffs for weddings.

But you may not even want to bring your own decorations, as many patrons love the interior design and ambiance.

"The décor is very unique. There's a mosaic of Renaissance paintings. People, as soon as they walk in, comment on how relaxing it is. The music complements the atmosphere," Davis says.

And it won't break the bank – the prices are reasonable. The average dinner entree is $25, while the average lunch dish is $15.

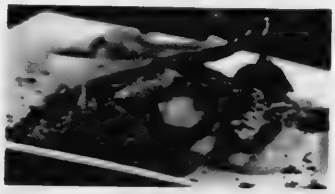
Even for those without an upcoming celebration, it may be worth dropping by just for their weekly specials. Seven days a week, a menu item is drastically reduced, from $4 domestic pints on Monday to two-for-one cake slices on Sunday.

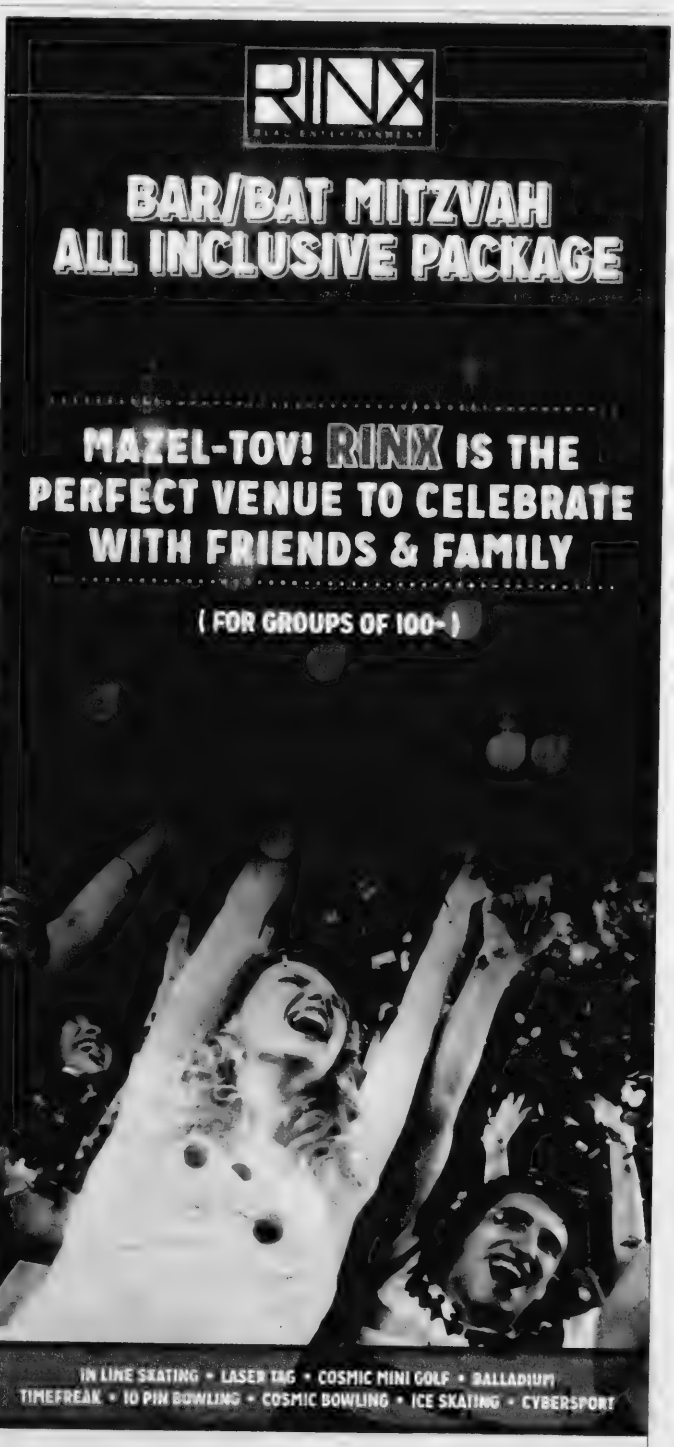
Davis likes to call Thursday's special "date night" as you can get a 3-course meal for two for just $44.

"You can get in and out of the restaurant for probably $60 to $70," including wine, and post-dinner coffee.

Picky eaters and children are sure to be satisfied with the extensive menu. "It's the total package," he says.

The franchise chain originated in London, Ontario and is growing to five more locations in the GTA next year. ■

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STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Bowling is one of those activities that both kids and adults enjoy, so it seems like a great place to host a party.

And when it comes to a bowling celebration of any kind, Lucky Strike sees itself as the top choice around.

"Lucky Strike is the leading boutique bowling and entertainment brand in the country, providing guests with the very best entertainment, food and drinks," said Lucky Strike's Brandon Thomsen.

"In addition to premier entertainment, Lucky Strike is the innovator of bowling cuisine, featuring a chef-driven, made-from-scratch menu using fresh, high-quality ingredients."

That can include anything from pizza to mac n cheese bites to salmon lollipops, and everything in between, depending on your event.

"Lucky Strike offers its guests a memorable visit by providing the best food, drinks and entertainment in the most electric venue in town," Thomsen said.

Children's parties are quite customizable, allowing for any number of special additions.

"Lucky Strike birthday packages include two hours of bowling, along with shoe rental, food items and soft drinks that are replenished during the two-hour party, served directly to the kids at the lanes," Thomsen said.

"Lucky Strike offers kid-sized shoes, low-weight balls, bumpers, rolling ramps and replenished menu items – along with party [favours] kids will love."

One of the most popular items for a child's birthday is the autographable bowling pin, which acts as a keepsake from the event

Other popular items to take away from the party are things such as glow necklaces, bowling-themed swag bags, and Lucky Strike gear like shirts, pens and cups.

There is also access to things like a photo booth, t-shirt and art stations, and even a build-your-own sundae bar.

For teenage and adult parties, both the menu and atmosphere are a little more grown-up to suit their tastes.

"Lucky Strike offers upscale, state-of-the-art private function party spaces, sophisticated menus, full-service bars, and cutting edge [sound and video] systems," Thomsen said. "Our party packages offer food, beverage and entertainment options to accommodate any party."

> *The best food, drinks and entertainment in the most electric venue in town*

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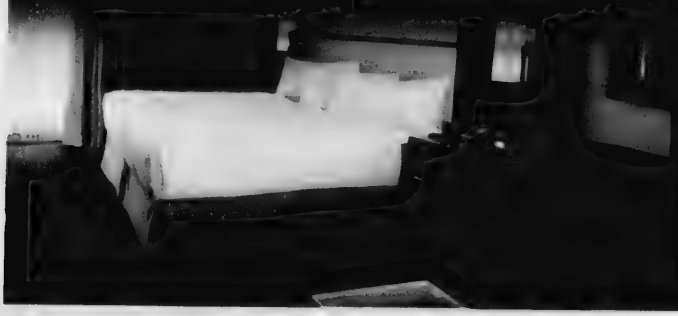

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As a premier place for bowling and parties, Lucky Strike now has over 20 locations across the United States, along with its lone Canadian spot in Vaughan Mills.

"Lucky Strike Entertainment was founded in 2003 by Steven and Gillian Foster and Kevin Troy, with the opening of Lucky Strike in the heart of Hollywood," Thomsen said.

"Lucky Strike Entertainment is the creator and operator of a variety of entertainment concepts throughout the world that cater to any age, featuring premium bowling, restaurants, bars, live music, dance clubs, billiards and game rooms."

The popular bowling alley can host parties for as few as eight people, or as many as can fit comfortably in the venue.

"Regardless of the celebration, Lucky Strike will personalize the event to fit the size and budget," Thomsen said.

For more information on booking parties, you can call one of Lucky Strike's professional event planners.

For a large party, you can reach Angela Koziej at 905-760-1686, or for a smaller event, as well as for a child or teenager's birthday celebration, try Denise Aquila at 905-760-8307.

There is also lots that can be found on the website, at bowlluckystrike.com ■

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Shopping for the **Perfect Wedding Gift**

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Finding the right wedding gift can be a tricky endeavour, which is why most of us resort to the registry, when there is one, or the 'flat gift,' a cheque that gives newlyweds the chance to buy precisely what they want. While these gifts are easily executed, what they lack is a personal touch. And for some weddings, for those special couples in your life, you want and need that personal touch in a gift, something you know will last much longer than a cashed cheque. Here are some top picks for wedding gifts.

Enrobed

Some clothing items go out of style but one that's timeless is the terry cloth robe. It's no secret that newlyweds spend more time in bed than the rest of us. But when they do get up, how about enrobing them? There's nothing like the feeling of a soft, high quality terry robe against your skin, and all the better when it's personalized with the recipients' name, initial or a matching set of "his" and "hers." High end stores offer meticulously crafted imported robes made from Egyptian cotton and personalized with custom monogramming. Monogram colour, precise monogram and gift packaging are easily selected online.

Wood Signs

Marriage is something to be proud of, so a truly personal gift would be a rustic wood sign that proudly announces the establishment of a new family and the date of its founding. There are several artists on etsy.com that offer signs like this. Browse the website for more interesting, personalized gift ideas, including cutting boards engraved with the newlyweds' initials. Info: etsy.com

Cooking Companion

Any newly wedded couple is going to need to learn their way around kitchen sooner or later, and who better to teach them than Jewish cookbook author Susie Fishbein? Fishbein's Kosher By Design series of cookbooks is a fantastic addition to any kitchen and ArtScroll has conveniently packaged five of them into a perfect gift set ($157.49). Fishbein's recipes are easily executed, well explained and accompanied by exquisite, mouthwatering photographs. They range from fancy meals that will impress guests, to everyday quick dinners and everything in between. ■

Camp Gesher wedding

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The matchmaking efforts of mutual friends sparked the nine-year courtship of Gabriel Pickus and Shira Bromberg.

When Pickus went on an organized trip to Israel for 16-year-olds from Habonim Dror camps, he became friends with the group from Camp Gesher in Ontario.

Two of the Gesher girls told Pickus, a Chicago native, that he would get along well with their friend, Shira Bromberg, he says.

She and Pickus – both are 27 – met about six months later at a Habonim-Dror winter seminar in Maryland.

Pickus was smitten that first weekend. "We had a great time and I knew I wanted to stay in touch with Shira.

"Subsequently I took trips [to Toronto]. We hung out with our mutual friends. I made my feelings for Shira pretty clear."

Bromberg and Pickus' long-distance relationship continued throughout their college years. She studied nutrition at Ryerson University, while he was a religion major at Goucher College in Maryland. He also worked at Camp Gesher for a couple of summers.

After his graduation, Pickus got a job in Baltimore. He's an educator for underserved youth. The couple say they were tired of the long separations. In April 2012, they had a civil marriage so that Bromberg could become a legal U.S. resident. But they still wanted a Jewish wedding.

"One night I had a dream about getting married up at camp. Gesher is a special place. Nothing can compare to it."

She woke Pickus up at three in the morning, he laughs. "She said, 'We have to have the wedding at Camp Gesher.'"

The camp was not initially available in 2013, Bromberg says. "All the weekends [after camp ended] were booked. There was the Alumni 50th anniversary reunion, a rental on Labour Day weekend and the chagim were very early that year.

"And then the rental was cancelled. We had a small window to work with for the Labour Day weekend. I wanted a Shabbaton and wedding all together. It turned out to be the perfect scenario."

The setting was very dramatic, she says. "Everyone was facing the lake for the ceremony. The lake was the backdrop for the chupah.

"A lot of people came on Friday and by Saturday night, half the guests had arrived. "We had *Havdalah* on the basketball court. That's how camp does it. Then we had a campfire. Everybody enjoyed it."

A kosher caterer precooked all the food and had it delivered to camp. "We served all the food family style, just the way we do at camp," she says.

"We had 210 guests, and more than half of them came from out of town," says Pickus.

The couple rented a school bus to transport their friends from Toronto up to Gesher.

"We had representatives from every Habomin-Dror Camp. Our friends from Baltimore and Chicago are real movers and shakers. Shira's friends from Toronto asked us if we had hired professional dancers," he says.

Pickus' parents live in San Francisco. "They loved the wedding," he says.

Bromberg says Shaul Zobary, the executive director of Camp Gesher, made the wedding possible. "Shaul was extremely supportive. He wanted us to have a Gesher wedding. We brainstormed everything together.

"And he was there with his wife to celebrate with us. It would not have been a Gesher wedding without him."

Bromberg says she is very grateful to friends and family who came early and stayed late. "The wedding really was a community effort. It would not have happened the way it did without our family and friends." ■

Shira Bromberg and Gabriel Pickus stand under the chupah at Camp Gesher.

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Say 'yes to the dress' at **Kleinfeld Hudson's Bay**

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For Canadian brides-to-be who spent hours watching TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress*, and dream of shopping for their special day in the iconic Kleinfeld bridal store, that dream can now be a reality. The store has partnered with Hudson's Bay Canada to bring the bridal store to the Hudson's Bay flagship store on Queen Street in downtown Toronto.

Now, Canadian brides, too, can say yes to the dress – without the TV crew, however.

On the seventh floor of the flagship store is a 20,000-square-foot bridal boutique, featuring dresses from more than 50 designers and brands, many of which are exclusive to Kleinfeld Hudson's Bay in Canada (thebay.com/kleinfeld), ranging from some of the best Canadian to internationally known fashion and bridal designers.

Considering the average Canadian bride spends approximately $1,800 on a bridal gown, about $500 more than the average American bride spends (according to a recent *Weddingbells* survey,) ensuring they find the right one is important to every bride – and is something that Kleinfeld specializes in.

"What makes us different is the truly caring group of consultants, our in-house alterations, the stunning environment and, of course, the amazing selection of over 700 gowns.

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[We also have] beautiful accessories, including shoes, jewelry, lingerie and everything for your wedding day," said Evelyn Reynolds, senior vice-president of bridal, Kleinfeld.

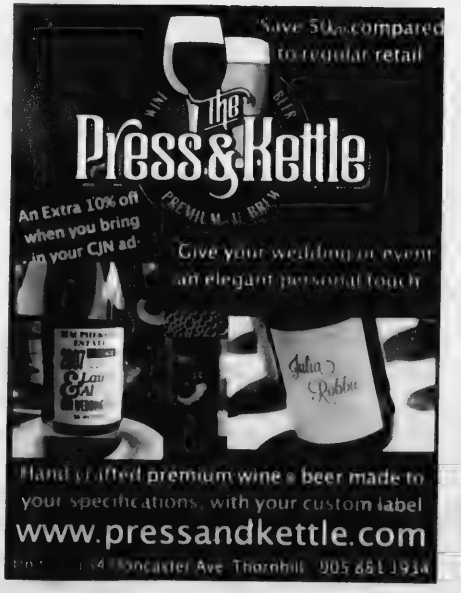
Their assortment is sure to fit any body type, and they can do full build-ups for Orthodox brides, she said. Gowns start at around $1,500 and go all the way up to $25,000 and more.

While brides may envision themselves in a certain type of dress, Reynolds says it's important to be open to a variety of styles and shapes that you may end up falling in love with. "Every bride has something in mind when they are shopping, but often they end up with something completely different. It is the one day in their lives when they should truly feel 'princess like' – but whatever they select, they should be comfortable.

"Our consultants will listen to their wish list, but often make suggestions of other types of styles, and many of our brides end up with something completely different from what they had envisaged – so an open mind is essential," she said.

When do you know you're ready to say yes to the dress? "When they put on the dress they don't want to take off, and they come out of the fitting room smiling from ear to ear, then we know they have fallen in love all over again and are ready to say 'I do' to their dress. [This is] the second most important 'I do' that they will ever say," said Reynolds.

Some brides may like to visit many different stores before making a final purchase, but visiting Kleinfeld's large showroom filled with every type of dress selection you can imagine, is sure to be memorable. "Every bride and her guests are treated as the VIPs that they are and we are here to help them find their perfect dress. They will leave with a memorable experience and know that they have chosen a wonderful dress which will only make a special day even more perfect," said Reynolds. ■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A good value for bar mitzvah parties

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Chances are, you or someone close to you loves to eat at Pickle Barrel.

So why not have a bar or bat mitzvah there, too?

Pickle Barrel has two spots ready to host a special event – its main banquet hall in Markville Mall, and the renovated Rose Room in the Leslie Street location.

"The main advantage here is price," said Pickle Barrel president Peter Higley. "We're not reliant on our banquet sales for profitability, so we're able to charge a lot less than a guy just running banquets all of the time.

"Our prices are probably 30 to 50 per cent below the market."

The Soupcoff Room in Markville Mall, at the corner of Highway 7 and McCowan Road in Markham, can hold up to 220 people, while the Leslie Street spot seats roughly half of that.

With the connections that Pickle Barrel already has, it can make for some very light planning on the part of the parents.

"We have a package which is all-inclusive where we provide the DJ, invitations, and we do the room," Higley said. "The room is kind of cool, because we have a lot of LED lights, so you can change the colour around on them to suit the mood or your colour scheme.

"We put chair covers on the chairs if they want to theme it colour-wise."

Pickle Barrel is open to it, as well, if you don't want to go with any of their packages.

> *We have real, fresh food and make everything from scratch and that's a big bonus for people.*

"You can simply rent it out and bring in your own DJ and such," Higley said. "You can go with an a la carte menu or a buffet [and] bring in your own people.

"It's priced favourably the other way though, because we have a relationship with Bounce Entertainment and he gives us very [good] pricing, since we use him most of the time."

And since it's Pickle Barrel, you know the quality of what you're getting to eat.

"We're food guys, so we offer a lot of choices and we give a lot of food, Higley said.

"It's kid-friendly, too," he said, also mentioning that Pickle Barrel has a separate catering division for these events. "We

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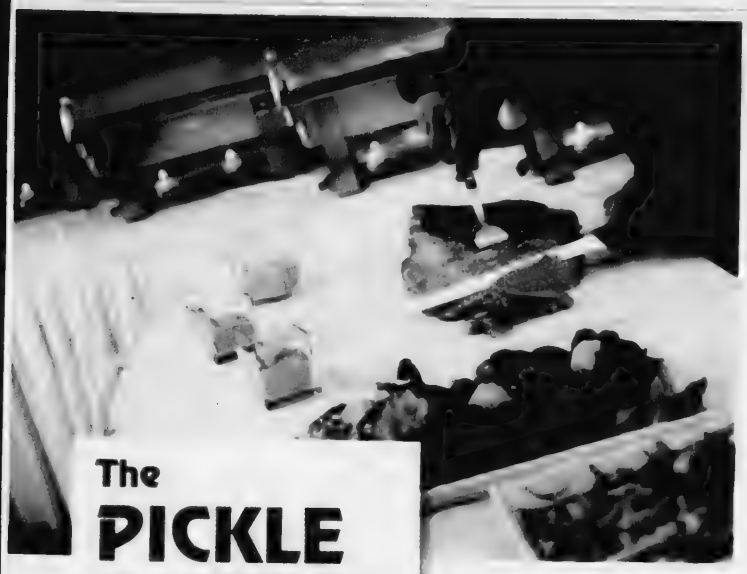

THE PICKLE BARREL PHOTOS

The PICKLE BARREL

make sure the kids have what they want to [eat] and then there's the adult piece, so there's a lot of variety and a lot of cool stuff for everyone to eat."

Higley said that most of the bar and bat mitzvahs that Pickle Barrel hosts are focused on the children.

"Parents use us for more of a kid's bar mitzvah rather than an adult kind of venue," Higley said. "There's immediate family and close friends, but mainly, it's a fun kids party with the DJ's, and they bring in dancers and things like that."

Higley recommends booking the venue early, especially during prime bar and bat mitzvah season.

"People are booking a year or two [ahead] for the popular times, usually May to June and October to November, depending on when the holidays are," Higley said. "If you go on our website, you can look at menus and set up an appointment to look at the room and get a quote."

Most people see it as an ideal choice where there is plenty to eat.

"We have real, fresh food and make everything from scratch, and that's a big bonus for people," Higley said. "We have a nice, big facility to have it in, too.

"People spend a lot on bar mitzvahs, and we're that value player." ■

For more information, you can visit their website at picklebarrel.ca or give the banquet manager a call at 416-984-5348.

Historic wedding in Poland

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA, WROCLAW, POLAND

When Katka Reszke and Slawomir Grunberg tied the knot at the historic White Stork synagogue in this southwestern Polish city, they were determined that the occasion would be more than just a wedding.

They wanted it to be a symbol of how thousands of Polish Jews, like themselves, have found their way back to Judaism and Jewish identity.

The couple, who are based in New York but spend part of each year in their native Poland, also wanted the ceremony – the first religious Jewish wedding in Wroclaw in 14 years – to be a learning experience for both local Jews and non-Jews.

To this end, they opened their recent ceremony to everyone in the city and turned their nuptials into an hours-long, open-air public event with klezmer bands, kosher food, two officiating Orthodox rabbis and loudspeaker explanations of each step in the traditional wedding ritual.

"Jewish community members told us that they had never been to a Jewish wedding, so we made it into a sort of festival," said Reszke, 35, an outgoing woman with spiky reddish hair who was born and grew up in Wroclaw. "By explaining the wedding to everyone, we're trying to break down the mystery that separates people."

The couple's personal histories drove their desire to make a statement and vividly reflect the complex dilemmas of post-Holocaust and post-communist Jewish experience in Poland.

Reszke is a photographer, writer and Jewish studies scholar who in 2013 published *Return of the Jew*, a book about the country's post-communist Jewish revival – a revival that shaped her own life.

Since she was a teenager, Reszke said, she had felt strongly connected to Judaism.

"I had a hunch I was Jewish," she said – but no proof.

Reszke earned a diploma in Jewish studies from the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish studies, lived in Israel, obtained a doctorate in Jewish education from Hebrew University and underwent formal conversion. But it wasn't until last year that she learned that her mother's family had actually been Jewish.

"My mom told me that her grandmother had confided on her deathbed that she was Jewish but made her swear not to say anything while my own grandmother was still alive," Reszke said. "She finally told me a week before my book was launched."

Grunberg, 63, is an award-winning documentary filmmaker raised by a grandmother who also rejected her Jewish identity.

"She used the term 'Jewish' as an epithet," he said. "I learned that being a Jew was something bad, something scary – something not to be mentioned."

After finding out that he was Jewish as a teenager in the 1960s, Grunberg said, "I did everything to reject this. I didn't want to be a Jew. To be different in Poland in those days was no good – to be Jewish was worse."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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Meet the **Jewish matchmaker-in-chief**

BETH KISSILEFF
JNS.ORG

Tova Weinberg will do anything to make a match – even adopt a dog.

In an interview from her home in Pittsburgh, Pa., Weinberg, the matchmaker who co-founded the Jewish dating website SawYouAtSinai.com (SYAS), recalls her confusion when a man whom she thought was in a relationship asked to come to her Chanukah party for singles. Asked why he would attend a singles party, the man said he wanted to marry the woman he was dating, but he hated her dog. Weinberg called the woman to let her know that her boyfriend wanted to marry her – sans the dog. When the woman balked, Weinberg said, "I'll take the dog." Within a few months, Weinberg was a pet owner, and the couple was married.

Launched in December 2003, SYAS was one of the first Jewish dating websites. The site's approach is unique in that it fuses the old-school shidduch strategies with new-school Internet dating. Unlike most dating sites, in which users independently browse profiles, SYAS relies on a team of volunteer matchmakers who scour databases of users and suggest matches to the users they represent. Only matchmakers who are married and willing to devote at least six hours per week to the project are eligible to volunteer. SYAS now boasts more than 30,000 users, and nearly 1,000 matches resulting in marriage have been made since the site's inception a decade ago.

At the helm of the operation is Weinberg, who works from what she calls "command central," a small desk area in her kitchen. That space is where the "magic" happens, she says.

As a shadchan (matchmaker), Weinberg deals with all kinds of clients with special needs, from Asperger's syndrome-spectrum individuals, to widows and widowers, to divorcees. She believes her toughest customer is a 30-year-old [Orthodox girl] who is looking for a "Tom Cruise lookalike who says *Tehillim* (Psalms)."

Weinberg has also had male clients tell her that they are gay but haven't come out yet to their parents. Other men have told her they aren't interested in her matchmaking services because they have a non-Jewish girlfriend they don't want their families to know about. In those cases and similar ones, Weinberg stays quiet, doesn't make a match, and leaves the client to sort out his or her issues.

In fact, Weinberg got into matchmaking, not to help Jews who are already observant, but to help prevent intermarriage.

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Tova Weinberg

Her matchmaking career had unofficially started before she moved to Pittsburgh. When she lived in New York in her early 20s, she got to know a philanthropic woman named Else Bendheim, who would host single men and women – 30 of each gender at a time – at Shabbat dinners. Bendheim told Weinberg that she would sponsor more singles events if Weinberg would host them. The first of Weinberg's parties was an unbelievable success: she connected Debbie Atlas with Mark Goldenberg, and the next day they both called her to tell her they liked each other and that it might turn into marriage.

That was Weinberg's first unusual success story, after which point she continued to make seemingly unmakeable matches. She recalls having one wealthy client who did not want to marry someone who needed him financially. She thought the wealthy man and one of her other clients had a future together, so she lied to the man that her other client was an heiress. The match was successful, and the man thanked Weinberg for lying because he would not have gone out with the woman he loved if he had known she was actually penniless. Weinberg explains that it is the "matchmaker's touch" to perceive aspects of others' character and the reasons why two people would work together, even if the attributes perceived aren't on the "list" of what a single person says he or she is looking for in a partner.

> *It is the matchmaker's touch to perceive aspects of others' character and the reasons why two people would work together*

Asked about the role of technology in dating, Weinberg says there is a "sickness" in that singles think more potential mates can magically appear, and dismiss suggested matches for trivial reasons like a girl's hair being too curly. She says there are those who think online dating is as simple as Starbucks: "Take skim milk with caramel and a dash of Splenda, [and] they are getting all they want."

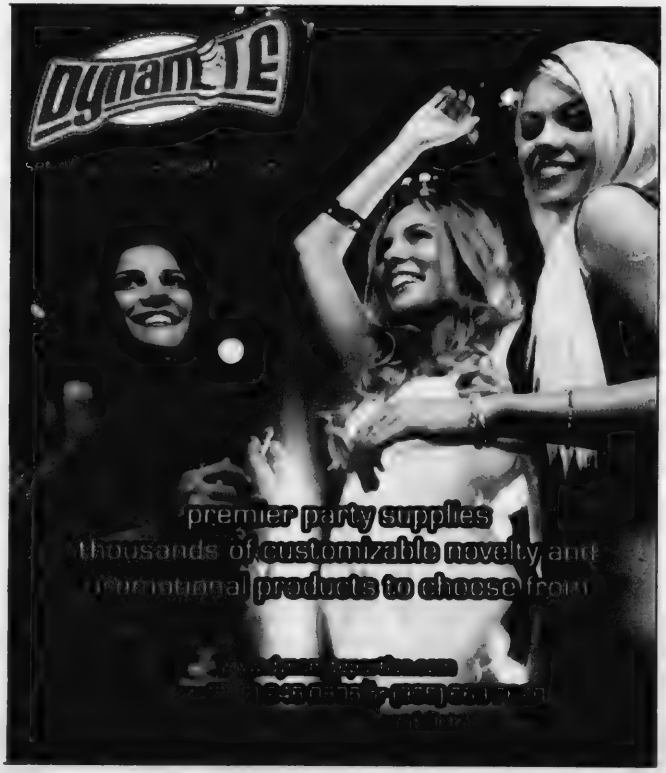
Regarding her own marriage of more than 30 years, Weinberg first says, "I had to settle." Then she amends her statement.

"I didn't really settle," she says. "Physically he had no hair, he was thinner and the same height as me. If I would have met him when I was 19, I would not have looked twice."

Instead, she met her husband at age 24, when she "realized what was out there." Though Joel wasn't her ideal match physically, Weinberg says her future husband had "everything else" – brilliance, integrity, and the refusal to take no for an answer.

Weinberg has five married children and 13 grandchildren. A large family photo in her home was taken at her youngest son's recent wedding. How did the couple meet?

"He ran after her on the street," she says proudly. For those not bold enough to make such moves, there are matchmakers like Weinberg and dating websites like SYAS to help Jewish singles do what it takes to find their soul mates. ■



Putting the mitzvah in bar mitzvah

JUDY LASH BALINT
JNS.ORG

It's 9:30 a.m. on a sunny Monday morning in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. Two large groups of revellers almost collide in the alley leading to the main square.

Both groups are accompanied by a clarinetist and a drummer belting out traditional simchah tunes, and in the middle of both are 13-year old boys dancing with beaming grandmas and uncles under a small chupah as they make their way under the stone arches from the Western Wall.

It's the Israeli version of the bar mitzvah extravaganza, and it's repeated every Monday and Thursday (days when the Torah is read) throughout the year. Boys from all over the country get called up to the Torah for the first time at the Wall, and then get danced up the steps to the Jewish Quarter and on to a lavish breakfast at one of the many restaurants or halls dotting the area.

But not every bar or bat mitzvah age teen in Israel is fortunate enough to have that kind of experience. For the tens of thousands of youths who are cared for in residential facilities all over the Jewish state, it's often Diaspora Jews who make the difference between having no bar/bat mitzvah at all, or having a meaningful transition into Jewish responsibility.

Zemira Ozarowski, co-ordinator of donor relations for AMIT, a network of educational programs that serves 28,000 Israeli children, is responsible for the twinning program that encourages North American bar and bat mitzvah kids to share their celebration with needy Israeli kids.

Some come over with their families to take part in the simchah they have sponsored, Ozarowski explains, while others conduct fundraising projects at home and send over funds to help support AMIT's efforts to inject joy into the lives of Israeli kids from difficult backgrounds.

Part of the donation is designated for the Israeli "twin" to receive a traditional bnei mitzvah gift of a siddur or tefillin.

Some lasting relationships have been forged, Ozarowski notes, and the program was recently expanded to include twinning between Israeli pre-teens from established Jerusalem neighbourhoods and kids in AMIT's Beit Hayeled facility in Gilo.

In Netanya, the Beit Elazraki Children's Home run by Emunah, a prominent religious Israeli women's movement with worldwide supporters, hosts many bar and bat mitzvah twinning events. North American b'nei mitzvah and their families have sponsored several major projects at the home, which houses almost 300 children whose families cannot care for them.

Back in 2011, a group of budding musicians from Teaneck, N.J., raised more than $20,000 as their bar mitzvah project, which funded new equipment for the music therapy program at Beit Elazraki. Several times a year, North American and British b'nei mitzvah join their peers at Beit Elazraki for a lively party that always features loud music and a festive meal.

A popular b'nei mitzvah activity for institutional groups as well as individual families is a visit to the Yad Lashiryon Latrun Tank Museum a few miles west of Jerusalem. Elisha Kramer, a U.S.-born graduate student, spent part of his army service as a tour guide at the museum. "Some weeks there would be two or three bar mitzvah groups every day," Kramer recalls.

"It's a great place for kids to learn about the need for a strong Israel and the legitimacy of fighting for Israel," Kramer adds regarding the outdoor museum where more than 150 armoured vehicles are on display along with a moving memorial complex dedicated to fallen Israeli soldiers.

Many b'nei mitzvah want to take an active role in their celebration, and Jerusalem Scavenger Hunts provides creative opportunities for learning and fun in and around Jerusalem.

Founder and director Tali Tarlow explains that Israeli kids can train to guide their friends and family on a fun-filled, educational, thematic navigation through the city as they engage with its history and figure out their place in its future. The program is tailored to the interests of each child, who works with one of the Scavenger Hunt professional guides and educators to develop a presentation at one of the stations used in the hunt.

Rabbi Chanoch Yeres, director of the deaf programming division of International Young Israel Movement (IYIM), leads a 2013 bar mitzvah for 63 deaf and hard of hearing children.
JUDY LASH BALINT PHOTO

"We believe a bar or bat mitzvah should be a special occasion and an opportunity for a meaningful experience," says Tarlow, a longtime informal educator who made aliyah from South Africa.

Any family that's been part of the package from Home Bar and Bat Mitzvah Project would agree with that sentiment. Started by American immigrant Barbara Silverman at the beginning of the second intifadah in 2000, the volunteer-run program prepares and sends tens of thousands of care packages to Israeli soldiers, focusing particularly on lone soldiers (soldiers without family in Israel) and wounded soldiers. B'nei mitzvah in the United States can raise money for the project, and those visiting can take part in the packaging and distribution of everything from warm clothing to toiletries to snacks. Each package includes letters of appreciation for the soldiers, which kids are encouraged to write.

For children with physical as well as emotional challenges, it takes a special effort to create a bar or bat mitzvah program they can relate to. At a recent ceremony in a Jerusalem synagogue, 63 deaf and hard of hearing children were called to the Torah in front of parents who were visibly moved by the moment, which was sponsored by the International Young Israel Movement (IYIM) and its deaf programming division in co-operation with the Jewish Agency. Boys with cochlear implants opened up the brand new prayer shawls provided by the IYIM with a flourish, while groups of girls chattered in sign language and waited for their turn to recite a special blessing for becoming a bat mitzvah. Ben Zion Chen, the head of the Association for the Deaf in Israel told the kids, "I grew up with hearing parents and didn't know what Torah was. You are all very fortunate."

"It's important that you know your rights and how to deal with your deafness as you grow up," Chen added, while a sign language interpreter translated his words to the attentive students.

"He didn't sleep all last night," said Orna regarding her son Shai, a deaf 13-year-old from Ramle. "He's gone through so many operations, and had so many difficulties in his short life – it's a joy to be here with him and see how happy he is," she exclaimed as Shai took his place under the prayer shawl spread over his group, while Rabbi Chanoch Yeres, director of the IYIM deaf programming division read the Torah portion. In true Israeli b'nei mitzvah style, the kids and their families, who had come from all over Israel, were treated to a celebratory lunch and a tour of the Old City to mark the day. ■

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Wedding sign of life and hope

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

It was only after immigrating to the United States in 1981, Grunberg said, that he began learning about Jewish culture, digging into his past and "becoming comfortable" about being Jewish. Many of his films over the past two decades have centred on Jewish or Holocaust themes.

Reszke noted the irony that growing up, Grunberg "was doing his best to hide his identity and roots, while at the same time I was doing my best to discover them. Today we are together and are celebrating."

The two met more than seven years ago, Reszke said, when she contacted Grunberg after seeing a post on a Polish Jewish Internet site that he was making a documentary on Polish Jewish identity.

"For me it was love at first sight," she said. "Now we are working on a film together called *I am a Jew*."

At the wedding, hundreds gathered in the spacious courtyard outside the White Stork synagogue.

Poland's chief rabbi, Michael Schudrich, and Wroclaw's Rabbi Tyson Herberger officiated under a tent-like chupah held aloft by friends of the couple on a raised platform set up in front of the elegant facade of the synagogue, which was rededicated in 2010 after a full-scale restoration.

Before and after the ceremony, klezmer, Yiddish and folk bands from Poland, the United States, Italy and Cyprus performed on a second stage.

Among the guests were Ellen Friedland and Curt Fissel, American documentary filmmakers whose own wedding in 2000 had been the last Jewish wedding in Wroclaw and, at the time, the first there in decades.

They had produced a film about Wroclaw and the White Stork synagogue, and they, too, had wanted to make a statement about Jewish revival by holding their wedding there, though the synagogue at the time was dilapidated and they brought a rabbi from the United States to officiate.

Friedland and Fissel's wedding was an inspiration, Grunberg said. He and Reszke used the same chupah as the American couple.

Before World War II, Wroclaw was the German city of Breslau, with its Jewish population of more than 23,000 making it the third-largest Jewish community in Germany. Breslau was a centre of the Reform movement, and the renowned Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary was located across the street from the White Stork Synagogue.

The synagogue, completed in 1829, was not destroyed on Kristallnacht in 1938 because of its proximity to other buildings. But it was desecrated and used by the Nazis as an auto repair shop and storage place for stolen Jewish property. The Nazis herded Wroclaw Jews into the synagogue courtyard before deporting them to concentration camps.

Wroclaw became part of Poland after World War II, and today, with some 350 registered members, the organized Jewish community is the second largest in Poland after Warsaw.

The synagogue restoration was spearheaded by a foundation established by the Wroclaw-based Norwegian Jewish singer, Bente Kahan. The building now anchors an educational and cultural centre that also includes a smaller prayer room.

Rabbi Herberger said he viewed the public wedding as "a sign of hope and life."

"It may have been the first wedding here since Ellen and Curt's, but in two weeks we will have a bat mitzvah," he said.

Reszke said, "Over the past 25 years, thousands have discovered their Jewish roots, but thousands haven't," she said. "A display like this may or may not encourage them - but it can't hurt." ■

Friends, family, the public and media crowd in in front of the chupah at the wedding in Wroclaw, Poland, of Katka Reszke and Slawomir Grunberg outside the city's White Stork synagogue. RUTH ELLEN GRUBER PHOTO

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Inside

Award rescinded
Calgary YMCA decides not to give Peace Medal to pro-Palestinian activist.
PAGE 28

Housing hardships
In Vancouver and Israel, the middle class is being hit hard by lack of affordable homes. **PAGE 20**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:18 p.m.	5:25 p.m.
Montreal	3:55 p.m.	5:03 p.m.
Toronto	4:25 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:14 p.m.	5:26 p.m.
Calgary	4:16 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Vancouver	4:00 p.m.	5:12 p.m.

FLASH90 PHOTO

Jerusalem under attack

Nine pages of the latest news, analysis and commentary. **PAGES 6, 12, 14, 15, 18, 34, 36, 37 and 38.**

Plus: Can Israel be both Jewish and democratic? A *CJN* debate, **PAGE 8**

Tuition essay raises crucial question

Is Jewish day school education a right or a privilege?
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Quebec reforms threaten autonomy

Raising funds, attracting volunteers will be harder, Jewish institutions say. **PAGE 33**

A magician at Auschwitz

Kathy Kacer's latest children's book is based on a true story.
PAGE 39

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Becoming a Belieber, and new app helps kids dig archeology

Nichols directed iconic films

Acclaimed film director Mike Nichols, who won an Oscar for the iconic 1967 movie *The Graduate*, died Nov. 19 at age 83. Nichols, a director, writer, and producer, was one of the few in show business to win an Emmy, Grammy, Tony, and Oscar award. Among his most well-known works were *Working Girl, Silkwood, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Closer, Charlie Wilson's War, Annie, Spamalot, The Birdcage*, and *Angels in America*. Nichols, born Michael Igor Peschkowsy, left with his family for the United States from Nazi Germany in 1938. He was married to broadcast journalist Diane Sawyer, the former anchor of *ABC World News*.

Popster tries to clean up his act

Canadian pop star Justin Bieber reportedly spent three hours meeting with a rabbi Nov. 19 at the Westside Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles. The singer "is on a spiritual journey," according to the celebrity news website *X17.com*, and reportedly has stopped using drugs and gotten rid of his entourage. Bieber reportedly was scheduled to spend two weeks with a Christian pastor, but apparently cut short his visit. The *Christian Post* reported that he was "learning how to spread the Word of God." In April 2013, Bieber was criticized for writing in the guestbook at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam that he hoped she "would have been a Belieber." He visited the museum before playing a concert in nearby Arnhem.

Ready for a spiritual journey?

Holy texts on your iPhone

The Israel Antiquities Authority last week launched a free iPhone and iPad app to introduce archeology to children using games and puzzles. The app, called Dig Quest: Israel, contains games developed in collaboration with Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists and researchers. As they play, children get a sense of what archeologists do and their excitement when they discover something new. Fifteen 2,000-year-old manuscripts, including fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, are featured in the app. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

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The value of a 2004 lawsuit by 11 U.S. families of terror victims against the PLO and Palestinian Authority for attacks during the second intifadah. A judge ruled last week the suit can proceed.

40

The number of cars whose tires were slashed Nov. 17 in a Jewish area of London, England. Two men have been arrested.

Quotable

This is not our first dance. We've been through this before. Everyone knows to be more careful.

— Rabbi Reuben Poupko on shul security after the Jerusalem terror attack. See p. 14.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz discusses fire safety on Chanukah.

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Letters to the Editor

The new sheriff in town

Kol Hakavod to David Nitkin, Donald Carr and all the wonderful volunteers who are "gunning for the bad guys," legally that is ("New group to employ 'lawfare' in support of Israel," Nov. 13). Finally, a group who will speak for us and all Canadians against the groups who seem to have had the freedom to promote their hateful agenda against our Canadian values and the Jewish community.

Judy Schwartz
Burlington, Ont.

Prayer on the Temple Mount

The question "Should Jews pray at the Temple Mount?," (Nov. 13), should be rephrased: why shouldn't Jews pray at the Temple Mount?

Rabbi Yehuda Glick had it right, but paid a heavy price for pointing out the truth: being severely wounded in yet another Islamist attack on Jews. To twist the question to satisfy the Islamist narrative and to cower to terrorists who insist that all of Israel is theirs, including the holiest Jewish sites, reveals their belief that there is no place for Jews on the face of the earth. There is no reason why Jews ought to help their propaganda along by giving any consideration to their genocidal demands.

Gary Gerofsky
Dundas, Ont.

Anger on the Temple Mount

The mind boggles. Elka Saadon sent her son to the Temple Mount with Rabbi Yehuda Glick, but she was sublimely ignorant of the possible risk involved ("Religious Israelis divided on the Temple Mount," Nov. 20).

She has lived in Israel for 17 years, but she remains blindingly ignorant of the Arab history of the site. She also ignores that the "other" might have their own point of view, not to mention the agreements with Jordan regarding the site, which the article also ignores. Saadon is a perfect reflection of the mindset of some Israelis – full of its own needs, justifications and anger, yet willing to assert that ideas which explain the conflict should remain unknown. With that one-sided perception, she sends her son so that he will not be among the "passive."

The article seems to want to present the religious in a good light. But what it really shows is that having adherents with a one-sided view is precisely why men like Likud MK Moshe Feiglin can succeed in triggering a violent reaction by demanding a change in the status quo and strutting on the Temple Mount. Have we all forgotten the trigger that Ariel Sharon's visit was and the intifadah that followed? Clearly Saadon doesn't want to know it, but certainly Feiglin does. Ignorance is useful to those who wish to set fires.

Shelley Corrin
Montreal

The price of Judaism

My Jewish education rests on two pillars. The first is Rabbi Hillel's injunction: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary, now go and study." The second is "justice, justice shall you pursue." This is why Rabbi Jay Kelman's article "We need not price Jews out of Judaism," (Nov. 13), where he acknowledges this is actually happening in some portions of the Orthodox sphere, broke my heart.

The idea of refusing a convert to Judaism on the basis that if they cannot afford the fees surrounding conversion, how will they afford kosher food or Jewish parochial schools, makes a mockery of what I believe Judaism to be. The inordinate emphasis on money in the Jewish community is an ongoing problem and a disgrace.

Beverly Akerman
Montreal

Remembering the war

The stories of Jewish service in the wars were touching and a needed remembrance (Nov. 6). As a young boy, my war consisted of watching my dad don his Air Raid Warden helmet, armband and flashlight to challenge the night, and listening to the plans and concerns of the adults hanging around his pharmacy at Harbord Street and Montrose Avenue.

My war was thrilling at the tales of cousins Milt (RCAF) and Jack Pollock (Royal Canadian Navy). *The CJN* has done a great service to the lives and memory of those brave young Jewish men who stood up for Canada in two world wars.

Bernard Goldman
Toronto

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How can we help from here?

After the attack in Jerusalem, we can't give in to fear. We must visit Israel, because it needs our tourism, and Israelis need to see that we're with them through thick and thin.

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BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
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Rabbi Grushcow: Many of our hearts and prayers are with Israel following a brutal terrorist attack on a synagogue in Jerusalem. What response can we have from here?

In my life, Israel has been an important place of learning and connection, a place that has fed my Jewish soul. An attack like the one last week in Jerusalem hits me in the gut.

We had a moment of silence at our most recent board meeting to acknowledge what happened, and I was glad to be able to share a message of support from a Catholic priest who is a friend to our community.

At the same meeting, I was proud to announce that we have a congregational trip going to Israel this coming May. But I am left wondering, as my teacher Rabbi Robert Levine often asked, "*Az mah*?" Now what? What can we do from here?

Rabbi Korobkin: I think the most important thing for all of us is, as Rebbe Nachman used to say, "*Lo lefached klal*," do not at all be afraid.

Yes, our hearts are broken witnessing our brethren being slaughtered in their tallitot and tfillin. And yes, it hits home, especially for those of us who are at shul regularly for davening, study, and social activities.

But to express fear, either verbally or by changing our synagogue habits, would be handing a victory to the terrorists, since that is precisely what they wish to accomplish. We must be vigilant and ramp up security in our shuls, but we must never be afraid!

I can't think of a better time to take a group from your shul to Israel. It is times like these, similar to this past summer's war in Gaza, when Israel benefits most from visitors from overseas.

Jerusalem needs our support, Israel needs our tourism and Israelis need to see that we, their brethren, are with them through thick and thin.

Rabbi Grushcow: As a rabbi, my instinct always is to have our doors wide open and welcome people in. Yet so many of our synagogues look like fortresses, impenetrable from the outside. I can't stand it when a newcomer can't figure out where to enter a synagogue, because there are three separate entrances and all of them are closed. It's the wrong message entirely.

Terrorism reminds us that there are those for whom nothing is truly sacred, and as such, nowhere is entirely safe. We do need to do our utmost to protect our communities, but I agree, fear can be crippling and in itself can be a form of defeat.

I take courage from friends in Israel, who remind me that no life comes with a guarantee. Rather, our challenge is to respond to what is in our control: living lives that are worthwhile and building communities that are holy. On this, I think we agree.

Rabbi Korobkin: When I moved here from the United States, one of the first things I noticed was the more relaxed approach toward security of our institutions. Fortunately, Canada had been spared so many of the security threats that have plagued Europe and the United States since 9/11. But as the recent events in Ottawa showed us, even Canada is not spared from terrorism, and our institutions need to react responsibly.

Our shul has already significantly ramped up our security. It's always a challenge finding that proper balance between security and accessibility, but we owe it to our congregants to give them an environment that is first and foremost safe for them and their children.

At the end of the day, our greatest security is that the Shomer Yisrael, the Guardian of Israel, is watching over us. Our job, as you say, is to build holy and safe communities. We leave the rest to HaShem. ■

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From the Archives | Memorial unveiled

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Solemn supporters attend the Kieltzer Sick Benefit Society unveiling of the Holocaust Memorial at the Bathurst Lawn Cemetery in Toronto in the early 1960s.

SeeJN | International visitor

The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section (NCJWC-TS), hosted a reception Nov. 13 welcoming International Council of Jewish Women president Robyn Lenn, centre, from Sydney, Australia, and NCJWC national president Sharon Allentuck from Winnipeg, fourth from left. Lenn and Allentuck arrived in Toronto the day before from an international executive meeting in New York City. Pictured with them are, from left, are Ena Cord, co-president, NCJWC-TS; Michael Mostyn CEO, B'nai Brith Canada; DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general in Toronto; NCJWC-TS members Roz Fine and Bunny Gurvey; and MP Mike Adler.

From Yoni's Desk

Would more guns save lives?

Last Wednesday, one day after a horrific terror attack in Jerusalem that left four rabbis and a Druze police officer dead, a Facebook post caught my attention. It was a photo featuring the typical accoutrements of a weekday prayer service – tfillin cases, a prayer book – alongside a holstered handgun. "This is how my friend is praying in Israel," the status line read.

A day later, Israeli Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch announced new guidelines for gun-licensing in Jerusalem, making good on a vow in the wake of the Nov. 18 attack to ease restrictions on firearm ownership in the beleaguered city. Jerusalem now joins a list of areas in Israel where residents may have an easier time obtaining gun permits.

The new rules aren't restricted to Jerusalem, either. Under the updated guidelines, gun permits will be made available to reserve officers, shooting teachers and those who served in some elite IDF combat units. In addition, security companies can allow guards to take their firearms home at the end of a shift (that privilege was revoked in 2013, in response to a rash of murders across Israel).

Even with the easing of some restrictions, Israel's gun laws remain tough, and gun ownership per capita is in the single digits (by contrast, Canada clocks in at 30-plus guns per 100 residents, while the United States leads the world with 90 guns for every 100 residents). All things considered, gun ownership is still fairly difficult to obtain in Israel. And yet Aharonovitch made no secret that the relaxation of gun laws was tied to the Har Nof shul tragedy and other recent terror attacks in Jerusalem and beyond. "The decision to ease the restriction stems from recent events and the need to strengthen the sense of security," he said after approving the new rules.

In the wake of the synagogue murders, it's hard not to wonder whether the two Palestinian terrorists wielding a gun, knives and a meat cleaver would have caused so much damage if even one person inside that shul had been armed. Perhaps a trained, responsible shooter would have been able to minimize the damage, or prevent the carnage entirely. But arming civilians does not come without risks: chilling accounts of gun-related violence in the United States warn of the dangers associated with making weapons more easily accessible.

The horrific images of a blood-splattered house of worship are impossible to ignore, and they call for a response that emphasizes the security of Israelis – when they're waiting for the next light-rail train or reciting morning prayers in the local shul. Whether the latest wave of violence and bloodshed across Israel signals the dawning of a new intifadah, the emergence of "lone-wolf" acts as a new mode of Palestinian terrorism or something else entirely, Israelis deserve to feel safe in their country. Increasing the number of armed civilians might just help.

But the image of the gun juxtaposed with the prayer book also symbolizes the fear of a nation on edge, bracing for the next terror attempt. It is a painful reminder that Israel is under attack. Brandishing a weapon at a place of prayer is a tragedy, too. ■ — YONI

Essay

Is our ner tamid withering?

Partnership between Israel and the Jewish world is in danger

Martin Ben Moreh

'And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute forever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.' Exodus 27:20-21.

The ner tamid – the eternal flame in our lives, the solitary light illuminated in the Temple in Jerusalem – symbolizes the spiritual journey of the children of Israel, kept alive through the long, twisted road of Jewish history.

I fear the flame is in danger of being extinguished. Today, at the height of Jewish stability and strength, when half our people are living in Israel, and the other half living in accepting environments, the ner tamid is in serious danger. Look below the surface, and cracks are threatening our Jewish world.

The brightness of the ner tamid is inextricably tied to Jewish unity, but the partnership between Israel and the Jewish world is in danger. The State of Israel was built on the assumption it was to be a collective home for the Jewish People, not just in Israel but also for those in the Diaspora. But Israel and the Jewish world have undergone significant changes challenging that partnership (most recently, the Gaza war in summer).

Over the last few months, Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has tried to decrease the gap, repeatedly declaring that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people. But do Jewish people in the Diaspora identify Israel's polices?

The Jewish People's greatest startup success story is in danger of losing its way (some might argue it already has). Israel is facing enormous challenges across the board, challenges that are testing Jewish heritage and values.

Every third Israeli baby is born into poverty. Every fifth pensioner in Israel dies in poverty. Religious life is monopolized by the Orthodox, affecting marriage, divorce and conversion, and hindering the recognition of Reform and Conservative streams in Israel.

As hope for peace fades, so too does the possibility of a two-state solution, and that presents a massive challenge. Israel is facing an eruption of violence between Jewish and Arab citizens, underlined in part by an acute sense of inequality between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority.

For thousands of years, the Jews have been strangers in other nations' lands. Now that the tables are turned, how will we react?

The task we now face is how to keep Israel safe, thriving and free in a way that the vast majority of Jews in the Diaspora can identify with. It is time to put the issue of an ongoing Jewish–Israeli partnership firmly on the agenda. This partnership – symbolized by the ner tamid – is essential to Israel's future as the nation state of the Jewish people, and requires the combined efforts of the government of Israel, relevant decision-makers in the Diaspora and every single Jew in between.

Time is of the essence. The issue must be broached wherever and whenever the Jewish family meets – around the Shabbat dinner table, at the JCCs, in temple, the federations, Jewish organizations, Hillel, youth movements, NGOs, the public arena, the media, blogs. In Canada and around the Jewish world.

We have to raise the temperature of debate. And with that in mind, the Reut Institute intends to appoint a special team to analyze the complexity of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people and examine how Israel might best represent central Jewish values. Our goal is to generate a series of recommendations to strengthen the link between Israel and the Jewish world. Our findings will be presented to the government of Israel and decision makers in the Diaspora.

In the meantime, the latest surveys of North American Jewry depict a general disengagement from organized Judaism as well as a lack of interest and identification with the State of Israel for many young Jews. We are faced head on with the question: Is our 3,000-year-old ner tamid withering? ■

Martin Ben Moreh is the director of Judaism, Renewed Zionism and Israeli Society at the Reut Institute. Reut's mission and expertise is to act as Israel's early warning system, identifying new critical gaps that affect the well-being of Israel and the Jewish People. Reut is a non-partisan, non-profit organization.

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Can Israel be Jewish and democratic?

For most Jews, democratic values are consistent with Jewish values

MICHAEL DIAMOND
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has argued that the nation-state law is necessary to bolster the Jewish character of the State of Israel. But the contentious bill has everyone asking if it is possible for a Jewish state to also be democratic.

I believe it is entirely possible.

The challenge with answering the core question is that while the definition of a democracy can be reasonably expressed, the question of what constitutes a Jewish state has many possible answers. At one extreme, a halachic state in which a majority of the decisions of the state are based on the interpretations and value systems of unelected rabbis could not be a democratic state.

On the other hand, a state that presents its "Jewishness" in a manner consistent with the many approaches to Judaism and Jewishness evident in Israel today can be both a Jewish and a democratic state without question. In Israel today, Jewishness is expressed in many ways despite the entreaties and limitations proffered by the Orthodox rabbis who control certain aspects of Jewish life (inappropriately, in my view). Judaism in its many forms is alive and well in Israel in a way that is highly democratic, offering choice, opportunity to agree and disagree, and the decision of Jewishness left to the individual.

The fact that Judaism continues to exist (some might say flourish) despite historical challenges is evidence of the ability of the Jewish People to evolve while still retaining their fundamental character.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Sunday's cabinet meeting ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

A nation-state law threatens Israel's founding secular-Zionist philosophy

DAVID BERLIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet passed three versions of the controversial Jewish nation-state bill. The bill, which has seen several iterations in the last little while, seeks to press the Jewish character of Israel with the stamp of eternity. After the cabinet passed it, the bill's three different versions went to a parliamentary committee tasked with combining them in accord with a draft submitted by the prime minister.

Justice Minister Tsipi Livni and finance minister Yair Lapid have attempted to block the bill's passage to committee, mostly because the draft does not explicitly define Israel as a democratic state, but rather as a Jewish state with a democratic form of government.

The difference between the version that was passed by the cabinet and another, hypothetical version that Livni and Lapid could support seems trivial but is, in fact, important. Netanyahu's draft leaves open the possibility of a future bill that could change the form of government in Israel. Livni and Lapid believe many – perhaps too many – members of the Knesset would be glad to replace democracy with one or another form of monarchy. They want that provision out.

Meanwhile, the prime minister hopes his compromise draft of the nation-state bill will not dissolve his fragile coalition. If his gambit fails, anything could happen.

Not since the disengagement from Gaza of 2006 has the Israeli public been so engaged in an issue. Advocates and critics are at each other's throats – in the media, in the cafés, at the dinner tables and, in at least one instance of which I have been apprised, in the nation's bedrooms.

Critics are arguing that the bill – in any form – will provoke the Arab sectors and may escalate the violence already on display to intifadah proportions. But several rank officers have taken such critics to task, claiming the Palestinians are not prepared to launch into full-scale violence of the sort Israel has experienced twice before. Last week, Shin Bet security chief Yoram Cohen declared that the many abominable instances of terror in the past weeks are to be considered isolated crimes, neither encouraged nor organized by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Contrary to official statements, it appears there is no brewing intifadah, because there is no central leadership.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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Each of us has the capacity to fight poverty

Dalia Margalit-Faircloth

In 2008, I was hired by a coalition of Jewish organizations to co-ordinate an initiative called the Jewish Poverty Action Group project. The idea was inspired by a conference on Jewish poverty held in Ottawa in 2005. On the train ride back to Toronto, a group of Jewish professionals decided to take action. They conceived of the project, found funding and made it happen.

When I tell people about my work, many are surprised. Those who work in the human services field know there is significant poverty in the Jewish community, but the community at large is generally unaware of its depth, breadth and pervasiveness.

Back in 2008, when someone would ask me about Jewish poverty, I would reply that 10 per cent of the Jewish community in Toronto lives in poverty. Since then, that number has grown significantly. Almost 15 per cent of Canadian Jews, including one in five children, lives below the poverty line.

And yet to a great extent Jewish poverty is invisible. We don't know if the man or woman sitting next to us in shul is struggling to put food on the table, nor do we know if the young adult that we see at kiddush is struggling with mental health issues. Many of us will never know what it feels like to have to refuse an invitation to a simchah because your family must choose between buying groceries for the week or giving a present, or to constantly worry about making rent. But many of us do know how that feels.

We need to do better, and so in October 2013, a national think-tank was formed to address possible solutions to our community's poverty problem. The goal of the think-tank is to engage in an open and ongoing conversation about poverty. What is the role of the community in addressing Jewish poverty? What is the role of government? Is there a difference between basic Jewish needs and basic needs for Jews? What is the cost of living "Jewishly"?

A result of the think-tank's work is the recently released National Statement on Jewish Poverty. We found that in our local communities Jewish groups are making a difference by developing unique responses tailored to the needs of members living in poverty.

To that end, we provide tuition assistance to help maintain children in the protective environment of our Jewish schools with necessary support services. We also offer employment and training opportunities and capacity-building programs for youths, access to emergency and crisis services to families and individuals in need, and financial support and assistance to our vulnerable seniors. We are holding governments accountable and advocating for the creation, funding and delivery of adequate social and economic policies. We are trying to prevent poverty.

Still, more needs to be done. Raising awareness, educating our community and engaging individual citizens are the first stages of a journey that will hopefully lead to the development of new ideas, new approaches and new partnerships. Just as anyone can be affected by poverty, each of us has the capacity to fight it and ensure the well being of each and every one of us.

Some say we will never eradicate poverty. Maybe so, but in Pirkei Avot it says, "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it." We cannot abdicate our responsibility to those in our community who need our support. We all deserve to live a Jewish life of choice. ■

Dalia Margalit-Faircloth is the director of the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies of Canada (AJFCA). The National Poverty Think Tank represents all local Jewish Family Service Agencies and Jewish Federations across Canada. It is convened by Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA and The Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies of Canada. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs is a member as well.

Are Jews returning to the Liberal fold?

Bernie Farber

Clearly, our positions on everything from social justice to the economy are radically different. Nonetheless, I quite like and respect conservative commentator Michael Taube. I've always found that he presents his arguments with passion and consistency.

Imagine, then, my surprise upon reading his most recent *CJN* column ("The first Jewish-Liberal-Conservative," Nov. 6) in which he postulates the rather fantastical theory that Jews have been moving into the political Conservative fold gradually, as opposed to in what most pundits have agreed has been a major and sudden shift of allegiance.

Pointing to what he calls "tiresome left-wing fulminations" to the contrary (though I'd hardly refer to Liberals as "left wing"), Taube insists that Canadian Jews have basically seen the light, and the fact Prime Minister Stephen Harper is the best prime minister Israel never had is beside the point.

Taube insists that today, Jewish voters believe in what the Conservative party has to offer, and the fact that it is, like all the mainstream political parties, such a strong supporter of Israel is just a bonus.

Interestingly, as an exclamation mark at the end of this thought, Taube reaches back – way back – to 1873 and tells us the story of Henry Nathan, Canada's first "Jewish Liberal-Conservative" MP. He explained that even though Nathan was a Liberal, he actually voted and acted as a Conservative, since at the time, B.C. politicians like Nathan were aligned with Tory prime minister John A. Macdonald. This, he contends, is proof of the longstanding affinity Canadian Jews have had with the Conservative party.

Truth be told, for better or worse, Canadian Jews have always felt more comfortable as centrists within the Canadian polity. Over the last 100 years or more, it was usually very much the exception to the rule to find Jews active in politics on either the right or the left. Yes, while we did see folks such as J.B. Salsberg and David Lewis holding up the one-time powerful Jewish left, or on the other side, the likes of Allan Grossman and Hugh Segal as staunch Tories, Canadian Jews were more often represented by Liberals such as former solicitor general Robert Kaplan, former justice minister Irwin Cotler, or Herb Gray, the only Canadian Jew ever to be appointed deputy prime minister.

I believe it's safe to speculate that it's a more recent phenomenon that Canadian Jews have supported someone they've perceived as a leader who is a strong and vocal supporter of Israel. And Harper has grabbed the Jewish political baton with gusto. Yet, he was, I hasten to add, aided by some provocative, unwise and inept statements by former Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, who during Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah claimed that Israel had committed war crimes.

No amount of back-pedalling helped. Any fair analysis will show that this was the beginning of the end for Jewish support of the Liberal party. Traditional Toronto Jewish ridings quickly began leaning toward the Tories, and by 2011, what were once strong Liberal ridings in significant Jewish areas were lost to Harper.

Indeed, even when I ran in the riding of Thornhill in the 2011 Ontario election, too many Jews told there me that while they liked me, they would be voting for Harper. It didn't matter when I told them that this was a provincial not a federal vote. Harper's stand on Israel was their focus.

Much has changed in the last four years. Today, the federal Liberals are headed by Justin Trudeau, a popular and strong supporter of Israel. Jewish Liberals are coming out of the political closet, no longer afraid to identify their political affiliation. Today, well-known Jewish Liberals such as Michael Levitt and Gary Gladstone are proudly running to be the Liberal candidates in the GTA.

With a federal election now less than a year away, I believe my friend Michael Taube may be in for a rude awakening. ■

Rivlin and Israel's Arabs

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Reacting to the negative views about Reform Judaism that Reuven Rivlin expressed before he was elected president of Israel, I ended my column last July with a question: "Will the new president of Israel respond in ways that enhance the dignity of his office?" Though reports tell of his meetings with leaders of Reform and Conservative Judaism, apparently he still doesn't always address Reform rabbis as "rabbi."

But he's reaching out to others. Most significant is his outreach to Palestinians. Writing earlier this month in the *New Yorker*, editor David Remnick described the president as "the highest ranking advocate among Jewish Israelis for the civil rights of the Palestinians both in Israel and in the occupied territories."

Last month, Rivlin went to Kfar Kassem, the village where in 1956, Israeli border guards killed 49 Arab civilians. Standing in front of the memorial to the victims, he said Israel must "look straight at what happened in Kfar Kassem and teach all future generations about it." No other president had spoken like that.

As he confronts the ugly side of contemporary Israel, his concerns aren't only about the past. *The Times of Israel* reported that at Kfar Kassem he called for honesty in admitting that "the Arab sector in Israel has suffered years of discrimination" and that still today "many Arabs today are faced with racism from Jews."

Speaking to a group of Israeli academics, Rivlin said that "Israeli society is sick, and it is our duty to treat the disease." Alluding to past events and recent incidents, he said "the tension between Jews and Arabs within the State of Israel has risen to record heights."

The president repeated the charge at a mass rally in Tel Aviv commemorating the anniversary of the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. He said that what happened then could happen again: "Violence is undermining the very foundations of Israeli democracy" which must be "condemned, denounced and isolated."

Remnick suggests that had these words been spoken by a politician on the left, supporters of the government of Israel would no doubt denounce it as Jewish self-hatred. A statement of this kind by a non-Jew would have been branded anti-Semitic. But Rivlin is a staunch member of the ruling Likud party, with a proven record of advocating for right-wing causes, including opposition to a Palestinian state.

Yet he's also said to be a warm Jew and a passionate democrat. He seems to realize that as dangerous as Israel's external enemies may be, the real threat to its future comes from within and is also manifest in racist rhetoric and discrimination of Arabs, both in Israel and the territories. Instead of blaming others, he urges the country's Jews to look at themselves.

It's probably with this in mind that Avishai Margalit, one of Israel's most prominent philosophers, is quoted to have said that "Rivlin may turn out to be the most influential president in Israeli history."

Rivlin's predecessor, Shimon Peres, arguably the best known and most appreciated living Israeli in the world, has done much to enhance his country's international standing at a time when its diplomacy appeared to falter. His influence in Israel, however, has been limited. Though it's too early to predict how Israelis and others will perceive Rivlin, there are signs that Margalit's assessment may be accurate.

It's no secret that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposed Rivlin's election, but the majority of Knesset members, who have the sole authority to make the appointment, decided otherwise. It may turn out to have been something of a blessing for Israel.

Judging by the president's statements, there's reason to hope he'll continue to articulate Jewish values and make a lasting difference to Israel's Arabs, who comprise some 20 per cent of the country's population, and perhaps also to the Palestinians in the West Bank.

One day he may even get it right about Reform Judaism. ■

Understanding lone wolf terrorism

Sheryl Saperia

Last month, two lone wolf attacks occurred in Canada. Martin Couture-Rouleau ran over a pair of soldiers with his car, killing one and injuring another, before police shot him. Days later, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau gunned down a soldier at the National War Memorial. Still armed, he entered Parliament's Centre Block, where members of all three major political parties were meeting. He was killed before more innocent lives were taken.

There has been some confusion, in political and public discourse, about whether these were terrorist acts – both because the perpetrators acted alone, and because Zehaf-Bibeau reportedly suffered from mental illness. These issues require clarification.

A lone wolf (single actor) can be a terrorist.

No formal connection between Zehaf-Bibeau or Couture-Rouleau and a terrorist group has been disclosed. Nonetheless, both were Muslim converts who subscribed to radical Islamic ideology, sought to travel overseas and possibly fight with the terrorist group Islamic State (IS). Couture-Rouleau's online presence publicized his IS sympathies, and Zehaf-Bibeau is also believed to have visited Islamist websites and to have had ties to Canadian jihadists.

While it is unlikely the men received personal instructions from a terrorist group, it appears they were incited and inspired by terrorist propaganda. Indeed, the Islamic State has called for its adherents to kill Canadians, including by running them over with a car. Just prior to launching his assault, Zehaf-Bibeau apparently read the online posts of a Canadian jihadist urging his followers to "carry out attacks on Canada." Moreover, the timing of these attacks – shortly after Canada approved air combat missions against IS – cannot be discounted as a possible motivator.

The Criminal Code defines terrorist activity as a violent act carried out for a political, ideological or religious purpose, intended to intimidate the public or a segment of the public, or to compel the government to change its policy on a particular issue. Whether someone acts alone or in direct association with an official terrorist group is irrelevant. If Couture-Rouleau and Zehaf-Bibeau were perpetrating their crimes as an expression of their Islamist convictions, in support of IS and against Canada's military action in Iraq, they could be said to have committed terrorist activity.

A mentally ill person can be a terrorist.

Strikingly, lone wolf terrorists are 13 times more likely to suffer mental health issues than members of a terrorist group. (One theory for such a phenomenon is that individuals displaying traits of mental illness will not be selected for recruitment in a group.)

However, a court designation of not criminally responsible by reason of mental disorder is made only if it can be proven that mental illness rendered the accused unable to appreciate the nature or wrongness of his/her actions. This requires a fairly high level of proof.

In other words, suffering from mental illness does not necessarily exempt a terrorist from criminal responsibility under the law. Research has found that terrorists with mental illness can display rational motivations and plan sophisticated attacks.

Indeed, Zehaf-Bibeau took a public tour of Centre Block just weeks before his attack, suggesting planning and premeditation rather than irrational impulsivity. And according to the RCMP commissioner, there is "persuasive evidence" that his act was "driven by ideological and political motives," including a video Zehaf-Bibeau made to explain himself.

Federal public safety minister Steven Blaney attributed Zehaf-Bibeau's rampage to an "explosive cocktail" of mental illness, drug addiction and extremist ideology – a reasonable theory that accepts that multiple factors can drive human behaviour.

We do not yet know enough about Zehaf-Bibeau's mental condition. But his criminal record and history of mental illness do not automatically indicate that he lacked the requisite *mens rea* to perpetrate a terrorist offence. Terrorism need not be the exclusive domain of psychologically healthy individuals with no criminal backgrounds.

More information will come to light as the investigations proceed. But let us start by recognizing that terrorists come in many forms – including lone actors and those with mental illness. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

Former Torontonian still in coma after three surgeries

SHERI SHEFA
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Howie Rothman, a Canadian-Israeli citizen described as "one of the nicest, kindest people you could ever hope to meet," is fighting for his life after sustaining injuries in the terror attack on a Jerusalem shul that left five people dead and many more injured.

"He is in a medically induced coma after three surgeries – one on his head, one for his eye and one for his arm," said Rothman's sister, Shelley Rothman-Benhaim, who spoke to *The CJN* from her home in the Montreal suburb of Côte St-Luc.

But when doctors tried to rouse him from his coma over the weekend, Rothman became distressed and his doctors decided to keep him sedated, his brother, Steve Rothman, told *The CJN* from Toronto.

He said that as of Monday morning, there had been no change in his brother's condition, which was stable, but critical, and he could remain in intensive care for months.

On Nov. 18, two Palestinian men, carrying a gun and wielding a meat cleaver, stormed the Kehilat Bnei Torah shul in the haredi neighbourhood of Har Nof in Jerusalem. Rothman, a 54-year-old Toronto-native who made aliyah 30 years ago, sustained life-threatening injuries after being struck repeatedly with a meat cleaver.

Rothman's mother, Mollie, who lives in Toronto, said she's been receiving updates from another son, Jeff Rothman, who also made aliyah to Israel many years ago.

"My son, Jeff, he called me in the morning, and he said there was a slight improvement. [Howie] is under sedation in an induced coma, and he's not talking or whatever, but I was just glad that there was a slight improvement to his heart rate," she said.

"He had a four-hour surgery. They got him with a meat cleaver in his head, his neck, and his arm. My son would have tried to help everybody there, no matter if he put himself in danger. That's what he is. He is the most amazing, kindest person that I know."

Rothman, who graduated from the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto in 1979, studied computer science at York University and now holds a government job in Israel working with computers.

His mother said that Rothman, one of five children, prayed regularly and studied at the site of the attack.

She spoke to Rothman's wife, Risa, who spent the night after the attack at Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem where he's being treated. "I told my daughter-in-law that I'm praying for him and she told me that a mother's prayer is more important than anybody's," she said, fighting back tears.

"For my daughter-in-law, Risa, it's a nightmare. They know everybody. She would know the wives of the ones that were murdered… My son, Jeff, said the top Sephardi rabbi came in all his robes, came to give him a *mishe'berach* [a prayer for the sick], and the top ministers in Israel are coming by the hospital. [One of Rothman's sons] who just got married on Aug. 28, my son Jeff said he's really matured and he's taking charge and it's amazing. They're all such nice kids. Each one is amazing."

Rothman has 10 living children who range in age from four to 22, but nine years ago, his oldest died tragically in an accident when he was 17.

Howie Rothman with sons Binyomin, left, and Akiva in 2013. FAMILY PHOTO

"Two [of his children] are married and one just had a baby about a month and a half ago. Another son just got engaged and was supposed to get married in a couple months, but I don't know how that is going to work out now," she said.

Mollie Rothman said she's been spending a lot of time with her family who live in Toronto and has also been getting a lot of support from friends and members of the community. "I've been receiving so many calls – people I haven't heard from or seen in many, many years."

Speaking about her son, she told an anecdote that speaks to Rothman's character.

"When I'm [in Israel], he'll take me to the Kotel, and there are people looking for handouts, and Howie would take small change in his shirt pocket and he doesn't miss one hand out. Someone said, 'You know, they have more money than you.' And Howie would say, 'If even one from 10 needs it, I'll give to all 10.' That's how he is. He's a giver," she said.

"He is one of the nicest, kindest people you could ever hope to meet. Always with a smile on his face," said his sister, Rothman-Benhaim, who added that she and her family worked to set up a fund to help support her brother and his family while he recovers. UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has established the Howie Rothman and Family Victim of Terror Assistance Fund to help with his medical bills, basic household expenses and the needs of his children. It had raised $29,000 as of Monday morning.

Jewish community groups are organizing solidarity events. This past weekend, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs held a "Solidarity Shabbat" event that encouraged the community to go to shul, where rabbis were expected to focus their sermons on the issue.

On Sunday, the Jewish Defence League held a memorial vigil outside Palestine House in Mississauga "to honour the memory of the five civilian victims that were mercilessly slaughtered." The JDL claims that the Palestine House supports Hamas and terror attacks against Israel. ■

On Nov. 25, Consul General DJ Schneeweiss and various religious leaders were scheduled to attend a vigil for Rothman at the Canada Christian College in Toronto. For full coverage, visit cjnews.com.

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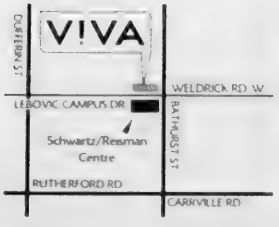

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Shul security already high before attack, experts say

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Events in the Middle East, particularly when they're as bloody as the attack on worshippers in a Jerusalem synagogue Nov. 18, almost always lead to fallout in Canada, at least on the security front.

But with security already at heightened levels following Operation Protective Edge in the summer and in the aftermath of the Parliament Hill attack in October, there is not much more community institutions can do to prepare themselves.

So said Adam Cohen, director of security for Federation CJA in Montreal and for the past eight months, national director of community security for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). In the latter capacity, Cohen has taken on CIJA's national security file, assisting federations across the country as well as other community organizations increase their security profile.

Most community institutions, synagogues and schools, have already implemented security protocols that have been recommended to them, Cohen said.

But given the gruesome nature of the events in Jerusalem, there was one development this week that was unexpectedly positive, he said.

Unbidden, police across the country called with their condolences and told Cohen as well as local community representatives that they were stepping up their patrols around synagogues and schools.

Police in Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg have stepped up their presence in and around Jewish institutions, he said. (A spokesperson for the Toronto Police Service declined to comment on steps being taken to increase security.)

There is no intelligence warning of a specific attack, Cohen pointed out. "It's all precautionary."

The presence of marked squad cars can deter someone planning a copycat attack from collecting information about Jewish institutions. It also serves to reassure members of the Jewish community that police take seriously their concerns over security, Cohen said.

Jewish communities around the world stepped up their vigilance in the aftermath of the Jerusalem synagogue attack that left five people dead. In an attack in Antwerp, Belgium, before the Jerusalem incident, a man was stabbed on his way to synagogue.

Adam Cohen

In Britain, the British Community Security Trust, an agency of the Jewish community, issued a security bulletin to Jewish institutions containing nine instructions, including a call to "ensure visible external security patrols take place to deter and detect hostile activity" and immediate reporting to police of any suspicious behaviour, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

In New York, police beefed up security at synagogues and other Jewish locations. The measures were described as precautionary and not in response to any known threat.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko, spiritual leader of the Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation and chair of the Jewish community's security co-ordinating committee in Montreal, said, "The intensity of security at Jewish institutions ebbs and flows depending on events" in Israel and around the world. His congregation had been in a state of "heightened vigilance" before events in Jerusalem.

"This is not our first dance," he said. "We've been through this before. Everybody knows to be more careful."

Rabbi Poupko pointed to security measures implemented at the synagogue to make it a more difficult target, as well as increased alertness being asked of community members. He also lauded Montreal police for stepping up their patrols and for investigating and prosecuting previous attacks on community institutions when they occur.

"In Montreal, we've benefited enormously from our relationship with police," he said.

Compared to Jewish institutions in Europe, which are often protected with armed guards, measures in Montreal are "low intensity," he added.

"Our synagogues are open in a way that would shock anyone familiar with the European system," he said.

Nicole Toledano, executive director of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation in Toronto, said vigilance is standard procedure at the synagogue.

"The building is locked up and you have to be buzzed in. We have security personnel around on Shabbat and when we have large events," she said.

"As a big synagogue (with 700 families) we want to know who is in the building and why they are in the building."

Toledano acknowledged "security is a high cost, but it's a necessary cost that we have to incur."

Cohen believes Canadian institutions have implemented adequate security measures. Doing more would be like wearing a second seatbelt.

"Right after the conflict in Israel this summer, we visited more than 100 centres in the country and gave them guidelines, corrections, where to put more emphasis, or less."

Cohen is pleased with the response and level of preparedness. While more can always be done, additional measures could cost more than the institutions can afford, he said.

Security guards may be helpful, but when the money for them runs out, there is little to show for it. Better to put your money into long-term solutions that make the facility more difficult for an attacker to penetrate, he said.

Though he declined to provide detailed information what those measures could be, he said steps that could be taken include improved lighting and installing a controlled entry system to buildings.

Perhaps most important, Cohen continued, is training staff so they know how to respond to incidents such as threatening phone calls or identifying problematic visitors and refusing them entry. They should be prepared to react to an emergency situation and even be instructed to scan mail to look for anomalies.

"There's always the fear of a random copycat," Cohen said. "But that also applies to school shootings. It's a reality."

Members of the community should "trust the authorities, the people who work in these institutions, but always pay attention to what's happening in those institutions, just like you do when you cross the street." ■

Shul attacks aren't a new phenomenon

Emergency workers at the Jerusalem synagogue where five people were killed last week. FLASH 90 PHOTO

SHERI SHEFA
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In one of the bloodiest attacks on Israeli citizens since a Palestinian terrorist killed eight students at a Jewish seminary in 2008, five people were killed and several others, including a dual Canadian-Israeli citizen, were wounded when two Palestinians armed with a meat cleaver and a gun stormed a Jerusalem synagogue this morning.

Sadly, this is not the first time places of Jewish worship and their congregants have been attacked by terrorists.

Below is a list of some of the attacks that have taken place over the past 50 years, both in Israel and abroad.

• **April 1956:** Three children and one youth worker were killed, and five more were injured when terrorists entered the Shafrir Synagogue in Kfar Chabad, a Chabad-Lubavitch village in central Israel, and opened fire on children and teenagers.

• **October 1980:** The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation Temple in Atlanta was bombed. No one was injured, but the building sustained extensive damage.

• **March 1960:** Congregation Beth Israel in Gadsden, Ala., was attacked by a teenaged neo-Nazi who fire-bombed the shul while members attended a Friday evening service. When the windows were smashed, two members rushed out to see what was happening, and both were non-fatally shot by the attacker.

• **October 1980:** On the eve of Simchat Torah, Palestinian terrorists left a bomb on a motorcycle parked outside a Paris synagogue, Union Libérale Israélite de France on rue Copernic, killing four people. Hassan Diab, a Lebanese-Canadian dual citizen, 60, is accused by French officials of being part of the plot. He was extradited to France last week.

• **September 1986:** Twenty-two people were murdered by Arab gunmen who raided the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul.

• **April 2002:** In Tunisia, the El Ghriba Synagogue was bombed using a natural gas truck fitted with explosives. It drove past security barriers and detonated in front of the synagogue, killing 14 German tourists, three Tunisians, and two French nationals. More than 30 others were wounded.

• **November 2003:** Two shuls in Istanbul, Bet Israel Synagogue and Neve Shalom Synagogue, were attacked when two trucks carrying bombs slammed into the buildings and exploded. Twenty-seven people were killed and more than 300 others were wounded.

• **July 2014:** In the midst of the war between Israel and Gaza, a mob gathered outside a synagogue in a Paris, trapping hundreds of Parisian Jews while rioters threw stones and bricks, and screamed, "death to the Jews" and "Hitler was right." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 27, 2014

WEL Group Players spread joy to fellow seniors

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The singers do their thing at an NCJW event earlier this month. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

You might think an afternoon of lunch and choir music for a group of seniors would be a quiet event, but The WEL Group Players' Nov. 11 performance at the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was a downright bawdy affair.

The WEL (Women Enjoying Life) Group Players is a subsidiary of the Toronto-based non-profit The WEL Group, which began in 1989 as a way for older women to support each other through programs, entertainment and trips.

Launched in 1997, The WEL Group Players is an all-female troupe of seniors who provide musical entertainment and comedy at venues including retirement residences and community centres. The six players at the recent show (a few were home sick) delighted the audience of several dozen ladies – and a handful of men – gathered at the NCJW premises, with spirited renditions of more than 20 popular songs.

Strutting and dancing onto the makeshift stage in glitzy, sometimes skimpy outfits, they drew laughter and cheers from the crowd with numbers like George Gershwin's *The Man I Love*, Nancy Sinatra's *These Boots are Made for Walkin'* and Liza Minnelli's *Cabaret*, all accompanied by the group's professional musical director, Rhonda Silver.

For a Jewish touch, the program included Sarah Snowbell doing Jewish-themed standup and Rhoda Shack singing Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*.

With a mandate to enliven seniors' spaces and bring older women in the community together, The WEL Group Players range in age from 72 to 88, and perform at both Jewish and non-Jewish sites.

"We'll perform anywhere, for anyone who asks us," said Shirley Katz, the group's director, adding, "We gear our program to wherever we go."

Based at the Earl Bales Community Centre, they meet once or twice a week to perform, and all members give Silver their input on what songs to perform. She arranges the music and helps each singer find the appropriate key. The players clearly provide entertainment to others in their age group, but when asked what *they* get out of performing, a number of members immediately chimed in at once: "Joy."

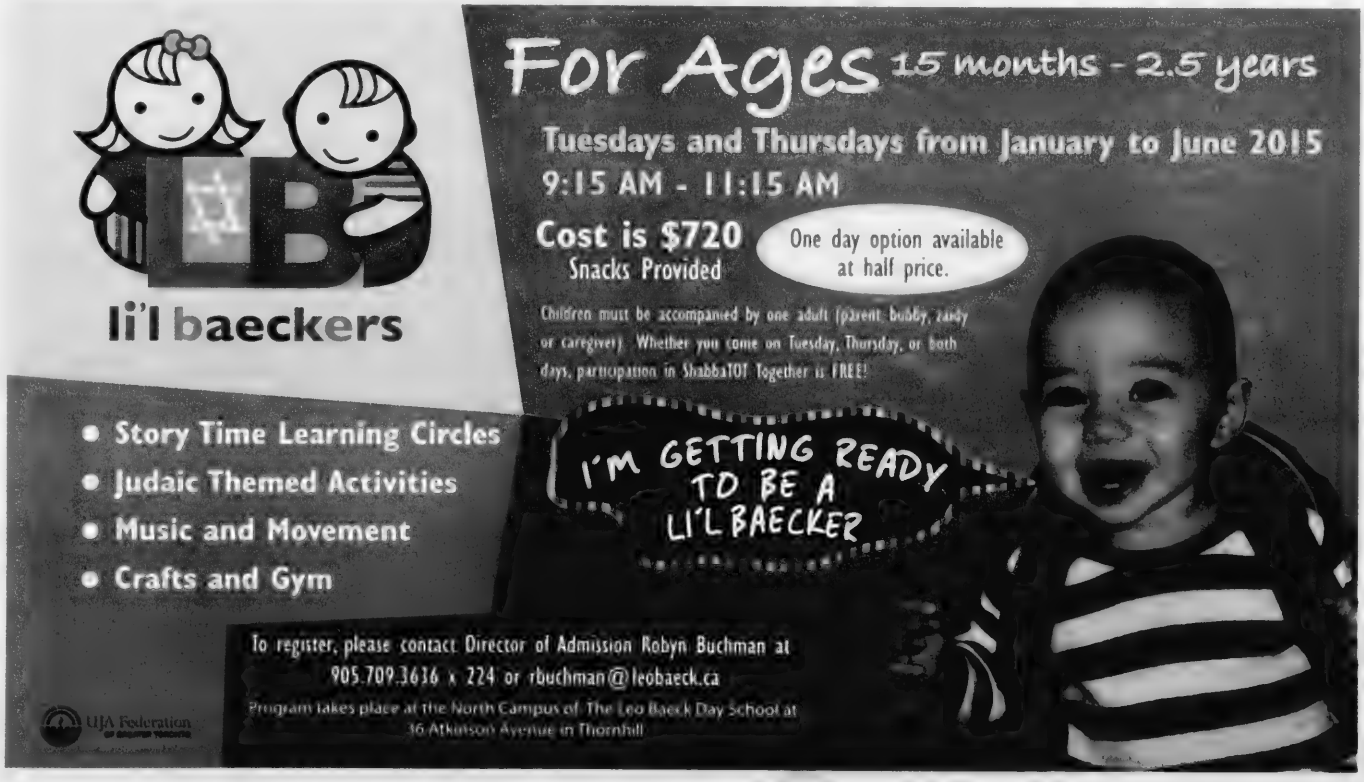
"They tell seniors to keep busy," said Rhoda Shack, the group's resident soprano. "Well, music is so uplifting for people, and we get such pleasure from performing for these people."

"When we go into these retirement homes and people are sitting with their heads down, as soon as we start singing, they cheer up," said Vickey Gould. "Their eyes light up. It's just wonderful… they really come alive." Gould laughingly referred to herself as "the funny one."

As for whether they specifically gravitate toward love songs, Katz chuckled, "We're seniors. We like love. We're *in love* with love… Seriously, though, what we really gravitate toward is comedy. We're working toward a show in the summer where we'll be doing more skits and a lot of comedy."

The members pay dues to the group, and Silver gets paid out of money they make from shows, but Katz stressed that they could use funding to help pay for things like costumes, which the players currently source themselves. "We do a lot of good for seniors, and we really need support," Gould said. "We don't have any funding right now."

The group will perform in March at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. ■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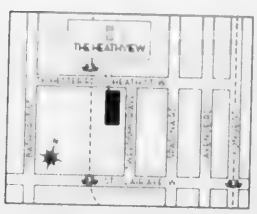

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Attacks could spark new intifadah, analyst says

PAUL LUNGEN
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Elliot Chodoff PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Tensions have been escalating in Israel in recent weeks, but whether that portends another full-blown intifadah is another matter. What could escalate matters is if Palestinians repeat something like the 2002 Passover massacre.

So said Israeli political and military analyst Elliot Chodoff, only hours before two Palestinian cousins went on a bloody rampage in a west Jerusalem synagogue, killing five and wounding eight.

Israeli authorities said they would deal the Palestinians a heavy blow, but whether this leads to a more general conflict remains to be seen.

Chodoff, a lecturer at the University of Haifa's International School, was in Toronto last week to address an audience at the Adath Israel Congregation in a briefing sponsored by Stand With Us Canada, an Israel education organization.

But even before his address and the murders in Jerusalem, Chodoff described an intra-Palestinian rivalry that was ratcheting up tensions. Following Operation Protective Edge, Hamas' popularity among Palestinians soared, he said, even though Israel wiped the floor with them, in a military sense.

But standing up to the Jews carries plenty of currency in Palestinian society and Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) is reporting that Fatah, Hamas' rival, which runs the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, has been trying to outdo Hamas in its rhetorical attacks on Jews. Hence the constant barrage of anti-Israel incitement in Palestinian media, he said.

PMW is also reporting that PA President Mahmoud Abbas is reviving the age-old claim that the Jews are threatening Al-Aqsa, the mosque on the Temple Mount, he said. "The Jews destroying Al-Aqsa has been a perennial winner since 1920, 1929, in the '60s and '70s."

In the 1920s, those claims led to rioting and Arab murders of Jews, he noted, adding that by increasing the rhetoric, Palestinian leaders establish their credentials in confronting the Jews and protecting an important religious icon.

As to the direction all this takes, Chodoff is unclear. It's the Middle East, he said. Normal logic doesn't necessarily prevail, especially when you consider it's only Israeli security co-operation that protects Abbas' government from a Hamas takeover.

Turning to U.S.-Israel relations, Chodoff said that at many levels, the relationship remains strong. Not long ago, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commended Israel "for going to extraordinary lengths to protect civilians and he said the United States was sending its soldiers to Israel to learn how Israel did so well to limit casualties."

"It carries some weight," he said.

As to the public opinion fallout from the Gaza war this past summer, Chodoff said that today's social media hasn't had any more impact than did the old media. Going back 40 years, public opinion in the United States consistently favours Israel over the Palestinians by a 70-25 margin.

Israel retains support in Congress, in academia and in business and church circles, he added. As for the administration, that's another story, he conceded.

U.S. President Barack Obama sets the tone and the policies, but he's limited in how far he wants to push the relationship by all those countervailing pressures, Chodoff said. Obama has criticized Israel, "but it's not just Israel," he said. Egyptians are unhappy with the administration's support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Obama is in the process of driving Egypt into the hands of the Russians and reversing one of the more important victories of the Cold War, [which was to] bring Egypt into the western fold," he said.

Sunni regimes are concerned over Obama's apparent rapprochement with Iran and the possibility of a deal that will leave it in possession of nuclear weapons.

Chodoff believes that Obama doesn't understand the Middle East. "Obama is a guy who doesn't have a lot of diplomatic experience," he said. He comes from a perspective that seeks to accommodate grievances. "He doesn't understand the hardball politics of the Middle East.

"The Middle East, in particular, doesn't fit into his paradigm of how people behave. It doesn't fit into the western paradigm. That's a major part of the friction with [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu." ■

Jewish and Muslim students feed Vancouver homeless

Kids from the Richmond Jewish Day School and the Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy took part. LAUREN KRAMER PHOTO

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

They huddled together to warm up on a frosty morning in November, but the 50 grades 6 and 7 kids from the Richmond Jewish Day School and Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy didn't let the cold dampen their spirits.

Their goal was to hand out warm clothing, blankets and 1,000 brown bag lunches to the homeless and destitute in the downtown east side of Vancouver, and with a long line of eager recipients their job was done in less than an hour.

The food, sponsored by Save-On Foods Ironwood location in Richmond, B.C., included sandwiches made a day earlier by volunteers, juice boxes and yogurt.

George Clarke, store manager, said he was glad to supply the $4,000 worth of lunches. "This started last year when the schools approached us and wanted to bring random acts of kindness to the Downtown Eastside. We're happy to participate and I'm really pleased to see the project continue this year."

Askari Mehdi, a Grade 7 student at Az-Zahraa, said, "I learned there are a number of homeless people here. We're just a small band of kids, but it's nice to know we can make a difference."

The principal at Az-Zahraa was also thrilled to have the children participate. "The kids know now that there's a need in our greater community. It's their mission in life to help others, and this teaches them to be grateful for the blessings in their own life." Az-Zahraa and RJDS are both faith-based schools, he added. "But we want people to understand that we're also part of the bigger community."

This is the second year that the students, whose schools are both located on Number 5 Road, also known as Richmond's "Highway to Heaven," collaborated to bring food and warmth to residents of the Downtown Eastside.

With the principals of both schools and members of the RCMP closely watching the interactions, the students actively approached the homeless and distributed food and clothing. "If our students were nervous it melted away with the first kind word," said Abba Brodt, principal at RJDS. "They were so excited to do a mitzvah. We're excited that they had the opportunity to work with their friends at Az-Zahraa again and bring more warmth and kindness into the world. You can't teach this type of educational experience. You have to live it." ■

Vancouver and Israel both lack affordable housing: panel

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

When it comes to housing, Vancouver and Israel have a lot in common because both are unaffordable, not just for lower income families, but for the middle class, too.

That was the message delivered at Gimme Shelter, a panel discussion presented at Vancouver's Temple Sholom Synagogue last week, sponsored by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University.

In Israel, for example, rental prices increased by 40 per cent between 2005 and 2011, noted Gil Gan-Mor, an attorney with the Association of Civil Rights in Israel and co-ordinator of its Right to Housing initiative. The rental increase led to more than 400,000 Israelis taking to the streets in 2011 to protest the cost of living and housing.

But it wasn't always so, Gan-Mor said.

"In 1970, a quarter of all housing units in Israel were designated for low-income families or new immigrants, but today, only three per cent of units are designated thus. The situation is forcing low income families to spend up to 60 per cent of their monthly income on rent," he said, adding that the result is that 70 per cent of the population is suffering from housing distress.

Penny Gurstein, a professor and director at the University of British Columbia's School of Regional Planning and Center for Human Settlements, painted a dire picture of housing affordability in Greater Vancouver.

"After the war, Canada used housing as a way of building our country, and government was actively involved, but since the 1990s, government policy has been about giving the private sector incentive to build housing," she said. "They're not interested in low-income or middle-class housing. The assumption today is that affordable housing in Vancouver should be just for the most vulnerable, and there's no acknowledgement that the middle class – teachers, police officers, etc. – need it too."

Paul Kershaw and Penelope Gurstein

Gil Gan-Mor LAUREN KRAMER PHOTOS

Both Gurstein and Gan-Mor said their respective communities are experiencing a generational crisis, because the ratio of income to housing cost is totally out of whack. "In Vancouver, you either invested in a home several years ago, or you're one of the elite," said panel moderator Paul Kershaw, founder of Generation Squeeze, a Canadian campaign trying to address the issue of lower incomes and higher costs of living.

"You have to wonder how people are living here," he said.

There's no single fix for this problem, Gan-Mor said, but rather, different solutions are required for different populations depending on their needs.

"Share ownership might be a solution for young couples," he suggested. "And we need rent regulation in Israel, because right now, landlords can increase their rent 20 to 30 per cent in one year. Basically, we have to look at housing as a right again, and when we build new neighbourhoods, we need to build them with an awareness of different sizes, needs and incomes."

If that doesn't happen, the result will be a polarized society in Israel, he warned, with people living on the periphery in pockets of poverty.

That polarization is already happening in Canada, where wealth is being concentrated in the cities and the suburbs are becoming more concentrated with low-income families, Gurstein said.

A national housing strategy is required, she added. "The co-op model worked well, but that program ended in the 1990s and today the waiting list for affordable housing in B.C. is huge. We're approaching a major crisis."

When the cost of housing forces Jewish families into the outlying suburbs, as is the case in Greater Vancouver, they can't participate as actively in Jewish life.

"We're recognizing we'll have to address housing to maintain a viable Jewish community. A question acutely on people's minds is, will the next generation of Jews be able to live here? We'll have to do something," Gurstein said.

Suzanna Kogen, director of the Tikvah Housing Project in Vancouver, said plans are underway to address this problem.

"We're building family apartments and homes in Vancouver and Richmond, and we hope to be able to house families in three-bedroom homes with rents anywhere from $550 to $1,600 a month," she said. In Richmond, Tikvah is working with the municipality and has other funders involved, too. Though more funders are required, progress is being made, she insisted, and the organization has "built really significant alliances."

While these steps are encouraging, the panelists agreed that the issue of housing is associated with great personal shame for those who can't afford the home they want.

"Full citizenship is associated with owning a home, and we need to reframe this as a societal issue," Gurstein said.

Kershaw agreed. "There's shame associated with people who can't get a foothold in a city. Young people are asking themselves what they're doing wrong, when it's not their fault that wages are lower and the cost of housing has doubled. We need to address that anxiety." ■

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BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

GUEST VOICE

Tuition essay generated flood of responses

Zev Steinfeld

It has been a few months since my essay, "The humiliating process of the tuition subsidy application" was published in *The CJN* (Sept. 4). The flood of responses I've received has been extraordinary. It was fascinating to see how people from different socio-economic strata and generations felt about what I wrote. People I am familiar with as well as complete strangers offered their thoughts on my piece, and while I acknowledge their feedback represents nothing more than an anecdotal, anthropological gathering of data, it nonetheless exposes some common refrains and themes that I believe are not arbitrary or coincidental.

Perhaps one of the most unexpected and pleasantly surprising elements of the fallout from the article was a steady stream of people from a variety of generations who went through somewhat of a similar experience and said that some aspect of the subsidy process led them to similar sentiments.

Sometimes it was the people they dealt with, sometimes it was accusations made or questions asked, but all felt varying degrees of humiliation, interrogation, uncertainty, powerlessness and a lack of transparency and open communication. A number of people confessed they probably paid way more tuition than they should have, burying themselves in financial debt simply because they couldn't face the yearly subsidy process.

The discussion that emerged in the wake of my piece is symptomatic of a larger issue: the question of sustainability when it comes to the Jewish day school system. I see the merits of Jewish education, but I've also heard from many who do not see that value. Due to rising costs, lack of specialized programming and strenuous subsidy application processes, some people chose to withdraw their kids from the system, or wish they had. I am not one of those, but I was shocked how many people feel that way.

Ultimately, the question of the subsidy application process relates back to the much larger issue of a sustainable system. In turn, the sustainability of the current system relates to an even bigger question, one that I believe is the keystone of this entire conversation: the philosophical approach that UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Centre for Jewish Education (and by extension its member schools) take to Jewish education.

> *Anyone who has been observing the Jewish education system can see hurdles on the road ahead.*

Is Jewish education a privilege or a right? If accessibility is a right, then the CJE owes it to the community to provide a thorough, transparent, equitable, efficient and objective method for determining affordability. If accessibility to Jewish education is a privilege, then sending my kids to a Jewish school becomes no different than driving a fancy car or staying at a fancy hotel – either I have the money or I don't, and if I don't, I can choose a less expensive option.

Anyone who has been observing the Jewish education system can see hurdles on the road ahead. There are conversations that need to be had – some for perhaps the first time ever – if we are to establish generational stability in the Jewish community. There must be myriad voices at the table, including those who have chosen Jewish education and seen the fruits of their choices, but also those who have not. If we can come together as a community, if we can share our voices respectfully with dignity and grace not jealousy and hatred, then I truly believe many of the problems plaguing the Jewish educational system can be rectified.

After my essay was published, an older gentleman divulged to me that he had sat on tuition committees at four different Toronto schools. "The writing was on the wall 20 years ago, and we didn't do a whole lot about it," he told me. "Now, the situation has reached a critical point. I hope your article sparks a debate that can truly lead to meaningful conversation and some significant changes. It won't be easy, but we all know some of the most important things in life never are." ■

Zev Steinfeld is a teacher in Toronto.

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Weizmann Canada raises more than $5 million

Weizmann Canada's "leading men" honoured at its recent gala are, from left, Jordan Banks, David Cynamon, Rob McEwen, Calin Rovinescu, Tom Beck, Sam Belzberg, Daniel C. Andreae, William Shatner, Ralph Medjuck, Jeremy Freedman GEORGE PIMENTEL PHOTOGRAPHY

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A gala celebration of Weizmann Canada's 50th anniversary Nov. 16 raised $5.7 million for the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel.

Some 500 people joined in celebration of 10 Canadian "leading men," individuals linked by their commitment to philanthropic endeavours and an understanding of the importance of scientific research and the impact it can have on the world.

Held at the Carlu Ballroom, the event highlighted as the honorary leading man Montreal-born, award-winning actor, director, producer, writer, recording artist and philanthropist William Shatner.

"When I was introduced to the world as Captain James T. Kirk, we had not yet landed on the moon," Shatner said. "Think about what we have accomplished in our lifetime in science and research. It is because of men such as Prof. Oded Aharonson, a world leader in space research, and Prof. Daniel Zajfman, president of the Weizmann Institute of Science, that we understand the universe in ways we never imagined possible. It is the men and women of the Weizmann Institute, who, every day, attempt to boldly go where no man has gone before. They are the thinkers, the dreamers – they are the true leading men and women in science."

The leading men honoured at the gala were Dr. Daniel C. Andrea, academic and philanthropist; Tom Beck, founder of Noma Industries; Jordan Banks, global head of Vertical Strategy and managing director of Facebook Canada; Sam Belzberg, chair and CEO of Gibralt Capital Corporation; David Cynamon, co-founder and executive chair at K2 Pure Solutions; Jeremy Freedman, president and CEO of Gluskin Sheff & Associates; Rob McEwen, chair and chief owner of McEwen Mining and Lexam VG Gold; Ralph Medjuck, chair and CEO of Centennial Group Ltd; and Calin Rovinescu, president and CEO of Air Canada.

The honorees choose projects that resonate with them personally and will bear their names, and they will fund research in neuroscience, complex systems, Alzheimer's disease, memory, personalized medicine, diabetes, olfaction, cardiac disease and neurological studies.

Banks said he was familiar with Alzheimer's, having lost five of his grandparents to the degenerative brain condition. "They were all intellectually astute, their brains were one of their greatest assets and one of the things that drew people to them. Ultimately it was their brains that were impacted, and that's the profoundly sad irony of Alzheimer's. It robs people of what it was that made them great in the first place," he said.

Rovinescu said he has "a personal interest in the way thoughts are formed, the way brain waves are transmitted and the way researchers can identify disease markers. The study of the brain has been called one of the most challenging scientific explorations of the 21st century."

Freedman will be funding work on diabetes, which, he said, "is fast becoming a 21st-century epidemic. I have been an insulin diabetic for the majority of my life and am one of the lucky ones because I can manage it quite successfully, but there are 400 million people worldwide with diabetes, many of whom are children."

In Shatner's honour, Weizmann Canada has created the William Shatner Master's Scholarship in Earth and Planetary Sciences at the Weizmann Institute of Science for 2014-15.

The first scholarship recipient is Lior Rubanesko, whose work uses an inherent curiosity about physics. He seeks to correlate the topographic properties of the surfaces of airless planetary bodies with their mean temperature. This, in turn, will advance our understanding of ice (and other volatiles) in the solar system – on the moon, on Mercury and on asteroids. ■

ALUT helps Israeli families cope when raising children with autism

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

It's a fact of life that raising a child with autism can be very difficult and stressful for the entire family.

Many autistic children require constant care, and some people can't handle the strain. So, in 1974, the parents of autistic children in Israel founded ALUT to provide rehabilitation services and other assistance for the children and their families.

Canadians have provided generous support for various ALUT programs, including funding a landscaped park at a residence in Be'er Sheva, as well as financial assistance for rehabilitation programs. With an existing relationship with Canadian Jewish organizations already in place, Rachel Rosenman made the trek to chilly Toronto to foster the relationship and lay the groundwork for possible support in the future.

During a one-week visit to the city, Rosenman, the director of resource development for ALUT, met with representatives of JNF Canada and of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, as well as expat Israelis.

Rosenman said she was not soliciting funds during her visit to Toronto.

"I want to strengthen the connection between the autistic children community in Israel and the Jewish federation in Canada," she said.

Her meetings with local Israelis are likewise designed to draw their interest to those less fortunate in Israel. She's found that "sometimes people have an autistic child in their family. Once you have it in the family, you realize how hard it is on the entire family.

"ALUT takes care of children and adults with autism throughout the circle of life, from the moment they are diagnosed to the last day," she said.

ALUT, whose Hebrew acronym translates as the Israeli Society for Autistic Children, operates residences across the country called "Home for Life."

To date, ALUT operates 18 such facilities, but there are three more on the drawing boards, slated for Modiin, Ra'anana and Rishon Lezion. Each costs $4 million US to construct. Though the ongoing maintenance and upkeep are paid for by the Israeli government, construction costs are borne by ALUT.

Rachel Rosenman PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

> *ALUT takes care of children and adults with autism throughout the circle of life, from the moment they are diagnosed to the last day*

Each Home for Life has room for 24 residents, beginning at age 16. The facilities are bright and cheerful and have a devoted staff to care for the residents, Rosenman said.

"It's a big peace of mind for the parents when kids are in the Home for Life," she said. "They are not always capable of taking care of them. The severe and medium functioning people need supervision and protection."

That can mean something as simple as teaching them how to shave, shower or go to the grocery store to buy a stick of gum. "That's a big step and we teach them step by step how to do it," she said.

For parents, it's a great relief to know their child will be taken care of, especially as they age and can no longer do so themselves, Rosenman said.

Even for younger parents, raising an autistic child can be difficult. These parents don't have normal lives, she continued. "All their lives are invested in raising children like this."

When the children can finally find a place in the Home for Life, "their families also return to life. They redecorate [their homes], go out, have people over," she said. "And the kids are happy there. There are kids their own age, lots of programs, sports, bike riding and swimming."

The municipality in Modiin is donating the land for the facility in that city, and each parent is asked to pay $40,000 toward construction, but "if somebody cannot afford it, I raise more donations," Rosenman said.

Israel's National Insurance is providing $800,000, leaving the Modiin home $2.5 million short of its goal.

Getting Israelis to contribute to the project has proven difficult. Israelis don't yet have the same culture of giving that you find in North America, she said.

Nevertheless, autism can affect anyone. Rosenman said it affects more than one per cent of the population.

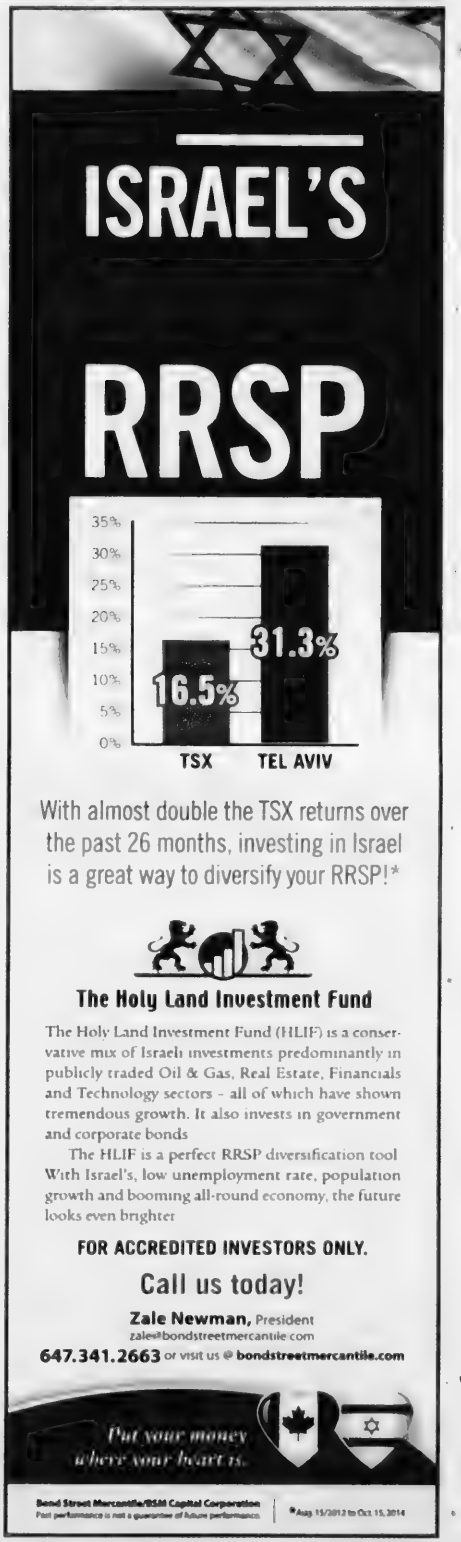
Autism can be diagnosed in children as young as 18 months. Often parents aren't sure what's wrong with their child, only that things aren't right. The child exhibits strange behaviours, won't make eye contact, doesn't pay attention to his or her surroundings, is not involved with other children. Sometimes, Rosenman said, parents think their child is deaf because they don't respond when called. They have problems communicating and some exhibit odd behaviours, like screaming or sensitivity to the touch.

The condition affects four boys for every girl. Nobody knows what causes it, so there is no cure, only treatment. ALUT begins with very young children, offering special education programs and after school activities, and it operates 10 rehabilitation nursery schools. ALUT also runs 13 occupational day centres where young adults come to learn basic life skills.

With a budget of $30 million, ALUT provides services to 10,000 Israelis. The ALUT Diagnostic Clinic diagnoses 450 additional children each year.

Canadians have provided assistance to some ALUT initiatives. In 2011, JNF Toronto transferred proceeds from a golf tournament to ALUT's Iris Village Recreation Area in Be'er Sheva.

And UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has funded a therapy program at a rehabilitation nursery school. ■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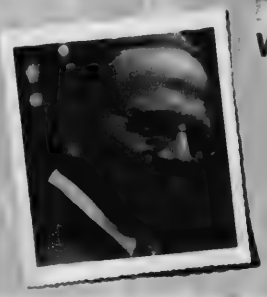

Professor Jonathan Sarna:
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Jews and Judaism in Palestine (70-640 CE): A New Historical Paradigm

4:00 PM at the University of Toronto Jackman Humanities Bldg., Rm 100)

Open to all. For more information, call 416-978-1624.

Tuesday, December 2

What Triggered the Maccabean Revolt?

7:30 PM at Beth Tzedec Congregation

Did Alexander the Great's conquest of the East lead to Hellenization among the Jews, to their persecution, and finally to the Maccabean revolt?

Wednesday, December 3

Were the Maccabees Religious Extremists or Prudent Politicians?

7:30 PM at Beth Tzedec Congregation

What do we know about the religious compromises and political policies of the Maccabees? What was the mixture of accommodation and confrontation, diplomacy and aggression?

Lee I. Levine is an American-born rabbi, archaeologist and historian of classical Judaism, the author of *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity* and *The Ancient Synagogue*, and professor emeritus of Jewish history and archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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GUEST VOICE

Judaism teaches we can all be remarkable

Rabbi Steven Saltzman

Editor's note: *Rabbi Steven Saltzman served Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation as senior rabbi for 25 years. He passed away in September at age 65.*

Some of the great religions of the East propose to teach their members how to avoid pain and heartbreak, and their secret is really a very simple one: they can teach you, in two words, how to avoid ever being hurt by life. Would you like to know their secret? Don't care!

Don't care about people, and you'll never be hurt if you lose them.

Don't trust anybody, and nobody will ever disappoint you or break your heart. Don't cherish anything, and you'll never be saddened at its being taken from you. Don't love, don't trust, don't cherish, and I guarantee that you will never weep. There are religions, great and venerable ones, that teach that. But Judaism teaches us just the opposite: care deeply and be prepared to pay the price that loving entails.

Love your parents, though it means someday seeing them grow old and weak, and your hands will be powerless to help them. Love them, though it means that someday you will lose them and feel that a part of you has died with them.

Love your children, though it will cause you so many sleepless nights. Love them, though it means feeling the pain of the scraped knees and their hurt feelings. Love them, though that will only make it harder for you one day to see them grow up and go out on their own. But do it the hard way; love them and trust them enough to let them do that.

Love your fellow humans, even though it would be so much easier to be callously indifferent to them. Love them, because to do anything else is to abdicate your humanity – to avoid the pain of being alive. To live means to be sensitive to pain and hurt, in the same way that the living raw flesh is so sensitive to every touch, while the dead cells can be cut and scraped and never feel a thing.

Judaism doesn't teach us how to avoid pain and sorrow; it teaches us how to stand up to it without being broken by it. How to live in a world where painful tragic things happen, and still affirm it to be God's world.

And then there is one more thing that Judaism would offer to do for us, to help us live as people were meant to live. There is a dream each of us has secretly in our heart – unless some of us have already given it up as untenable or unattainable – the ambition to be somebody significant, to matter, to make a difference in the world. None of us wants to feel that, at the end of his days, he will have passed through the world and left no trace behind, that he has had no real impact on the world. We would like to justify our existence, to stake our claim to some sort of immortality, on some remarkable achievement that will leave the world different for our having been part of it.

> *Anyone's life can be fashioned into a spiritual masterpiece.*

And yet, what can we do? Very few, if any, of us will write a book that will be read 20 years from now. It's not likely that any of us will come up with a medical discovery that will save lives, or an invention that will enrich lives. Who of us will have a bridge, a street, a building named after him?

Judaism speaks to this secret yearning of ours, and says that it is possible. It is within the power of every one of us to be a memorable person, to live a significant and impressive life. Judaism offers us not only the secrets of life, but the secret of immortality, of living beyond our appointed years – how to be the kind of parent who will be remembered with words of blessing, how to be a friend who won't easily be forgotten, how to be the kind of neighbour whose impact on a community will remain even after he is gone from the scene.

Anyone's life can be fashioned into a spiritual masterpiece. The equivalent of sainthood is not reserved for a small group of unusual souls who are separated from the rest of society. Sainthood – that is, a life of spiritual excellence – is the prerogative of every normal husband or wife, parent, working person, anyone who takes life seriously.

You don't have to have a particular talent for religion to be a spiritual, remarkable person. ■

This essay originally appeared in Yom Kippur Readings: Inspiration, Information, Contemplation, *edited by Dov Peretz Elkins, 2005. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing.*

Winnipeg marks 18th anniversary of Israel partnership initiative

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

More than 100 people gathered at Congregation Shaarey Zedek here last month to celebrate the 18th anniversary of the P2G (Partnership 2Gether) program and welcome the latest group of Israeli teachers and students from Kiryat Shmona visiting Winnipeg under the program's auspices.

Among the participants were students, Gray Academy and Brock Corydon school teachers, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg staff and other community members

P2G (formerly P2K-Partnership 2000) is a student-teacher exchange program linking Gray Academy high school students (Gray Academy is Winnipeg's only K-12 Jewish school) with their counterparts at Danciger High School in the northern Israeli community of Kiryat Shmona.

"Every year," said Lori Binder, the Gray Academy associate head of school and one of the P2G pioneers, "we send groups of six to eight students to Danciger High School... and an equal number of their students visit the Gray Academy and Brock Corydon School."

Brock Corydon, the home of Winnipeg's Hebrew bilingual elementary public school program, came aboard in 2005, partnering with Israeli elementary school Ramat Korazim. The Gray Academy also partners with Nachshonei Hachula elementary school in Yesod Hamala in the Hula Valley.

The visiting students and teachers stay in the home of a host family and get to see what life is like in the host community.

For many P2G participants, it has been a life-changing experience. P2G Winnipeg co-chair Fay-Lynn Katz noted that the Israeli students and teachers who come here see that Jews in the Diaspora – so far away – can become near in their hearts.

As for the Winnipeg teachers and students, the experience leaves them with a strong love of Israel.

"This program has been amazing," Binder said.

"There are few other programs that have been able to instil a greater appreciation for and love of Israel for Diaspora students."

Partnership2Gether participant Baillee Shuster said the program made her "crazy in love with Israel."
MYRON LOVE PHOTO

> *This program has been amazing. There are few other programs that have been able to instil a greater appreciation for and love of Israel for Diaspora students.*

A first-hand example of the effect of P2G on its participants was provided by Baillee Shuster, whose mother, Judi, co-chairs the program with Fay-Lynn Katz. Baillee was one of the 2010 participants.

"The first thing people asked me in Israel is why a Canadian would volunteer to serve in the IDF," Baillee Shuster said. "They think I'm crazy. Ever since I went on the P2G program, I have been crazy in love with Israel."

She noted that she had been to Israel before P2G, but said something changed with that visit.

"During the two weeks we were at Kiryat Shmona, we observed Yom Hazikaron and celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut," Shuster recalled.

"The experience allowed me to put life in perspective. I felt that I couldn't let my new friends fight for Israel while I remained comfortably at home in Canada."

After finishing high school, Shuster spent a year in Israel in a leadership program before enlisting in the Israel Defence Forces. She said she is still in close contact with her friends and host family in Kiryat Shmona.

Jonathan Kroft, a past president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, spoke about his children's P2G experience.

"Our children made a tremendous number of friends in Israel and bonded with their fellow Winnipeg students who participated with them," he said.

"When we went to Israel last, our son, Daniel, was able to show us around. And during this last Gaza war, our daughter, Emily, was able to keep us up to date on events through her friends in Israel."

P2G grew out of a conference of smaller Canadian Jewish communities in 1997, Binder said. "It was a grassroots project to twin schools in Canada and Israel. Thus far, we have had 92 students from Winnipeg participate in the program."

For the first few years, the exchange program involved only teachers. In 2002, it was opened to students.

The celebratory evening included a video featuring former Gray Academy students talking about the impact P2G has had on their lives, as well as a song by visiting Israeli student Esty Brandes and remarks by Nachshonei Hachula school principal Rachel Bar Maoz, who was in Winnipeg for the third time.

Bar Maoz spoke of the warm welcome that Winnipeg's Jewish community has given the Israeli participants in the Gesher Chai program – meaning living bridge – which is part of Partnership 2000.

Binder, Katz and Shuster also recognized the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg for its strong support for the program over the years. ■

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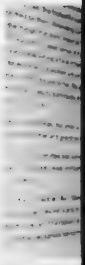

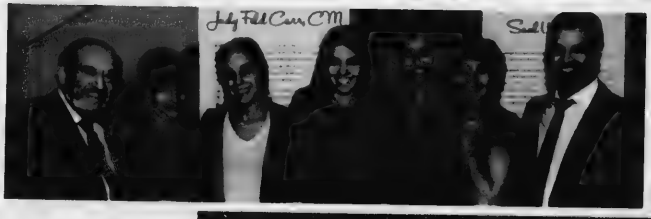

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 27, 2014

YMCA rescinds peace award to pro-Palestinian activist

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The Calgary YMCA has decided not to award one of its Peace Medals to an activist involved in organizing a series of pro-Palestinian rallies last summer, one of which turned violent.

Several weeks ago, Saima Jamal, program director for the Calgary Islamic Chamber Institute and formerly the program manager of the University of Calgary's Consortium for Peace Studies, was notified that she would be receiving one of Calgary YMCA's Peace Medals, awarded to people who work to promote justice and peace in their community.

But earlier this month, the YMCA informed Jamal that because of her involvement in organizing rallies in front of Calgary's City Hall to protest Israel's war on Hamas last summer – one of which resulted in three pro-Palestinian demonstrators being charged with assault after beating pro-Israel counter-protesters – she would not receive the award after all.

When the leadership at the Calgary Jewish Federation (CJF) learned that Jamal was named as a peace medal recipient, they sent a letter to the YMCA.

"We did send them a letter because we were concerned about the message such an award would send to the community after the violence that had occurred at a rally she organized in the summer," said Judy Shapiro, CJF's associate executive director.

"We sent the letter Nov. 10... a couple days later we were notified that she had been notified that they had rescinded the award, but [the YMCA representatives] said it had nothing to do with our letter," Shapiro said, adding that although the letter did not ask for the YMCA to rescind the award, she feels the right decision was made.

After the YMCA informed Jamal that she would not be receiving the award, she was invited to meet with YMCA representatives to talk about the decision.

In a statement that Jamal sent to her supporters after she met with the YMCA on Nov. 17, she said, "I had over an hour-long meeting with the YMCA... regarding their decision to revoke the YMCA Peace Medal two weeks after they allocated and announced it to me... In the meeting they told me that their CEO, Ms. Helena Weir and a few other senior staff had decided to countermand the decision... because

Saima Jamal FACEBOOK PHOTO

> *We were concerned about the message such an award would send*

of one incident of violence at one of five peace rallies that all persons in the meeting recognized had nothing to do with either my intent or my organization."

YMCA representatives did not respond to interview requests.

Jamal said that although the YMCA stood by the decision to rescind the award, they did apologize to her.

"I have accepted [the apology]. Now I wish to move on," Jamal said.

She said that although the YMCA has denied that they were influenced "by any outside forces," she is hurt by the decision the CJF made to send the letter to the YMCA.

"To me, regardless of whether their expressed concerns had any influence or not, many relationships have been damaged by both their actions and their comments. Those relationships will have to be rebuilt by substantive dialogue and shared good initiatives, and while I am uncertain at present how best to proceed and how to begin, I know it is something that we must do together," Jamal said.

"I feel that the gravest injustice of all was not visited upon myself, but upon the entire Calgary peace community, who have become demoralized and have united behind me against the YMCA and the CJF because of this." ■

$18M funds renamed U of T Jewish studies centre

SHERI SHEFA
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Marking the end of an $18-million fundraising campaign, about 100 people gathered Nov. 17 for the unveiling of the renamed Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies in its new home at the University of Toronto's Jackman Humanities Building.

This fundraising initiative – part of a larger campaign that moved the centre to a bigger space on campus and funds course development, conferences and more – was led by co-chairs Larry and Ken Tanenbaum, in partnership with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Jewish community leaders.

A $5 million donation from the estate of Anne Tanenbaum and the Lawrence and Judith Tanenbaum Family Charity Foundation contributed to the $18 million total, which will fund new programs that will benefit the 70-member faculty, more than 4,000 Jewish studies students, and the community in general.

"The $18 million goes toward an endowment and the proceeds from the endowment are used to support students, their research, visiting professorships, library acquisition, Holocaust studies, Yiddish studies – really, the whole gamut of Jewish studies, running from the Dead Sea Scrolls to [author] Philip Roth and everything in between," said Jeffrey Kopstein, director of the Jewish studies centre.

A number of people involved with and supportive of the three-year fundraising campaign, including U of T president Meric Gertler and faculty of arts and science dean David Cameron, spoke to the gathering about the significance of the ever-expanding Jewish studies centre.

Kopstein said Larry Tanenbaum spoke on behalf of his mother, after whom the centre is named, and "who always valued Jewish education and Jewish learning."

Larry's son, Ken Tanenbaum, also spoke about the "linkages between the centre and the bridges that it builds to the community, and the bridges that it builds to other units on campus," Kopstein said.

In Kopstein's address, he said that Jewish civilization "exemplifies the value of persistence and resilience, the possibilities of social and intellectual pluralism, and the need to delve into the deeper meanings of texts and events. Viewed in this way, the study of Jewish civilization is a natural part of what we do at the University of Toronto and must therefore be integrated across the university since it is too important not to be. I can't tell you how gratifying it is to know that the university and the community both support this vision."

From left, businessman Larry Tanenbaum, arts and science dean David Cameron, U of T president Meric Gertler, Ken Tanenbaum, and director Jeffrey Kopstein at the unveiling of the re-named Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies.

The goal is to turn one of Canada's leading universities into "a global seat of Jewish learning," Kopstein said.

"That is the broader vision. We are the one institution in Canada that has the capacity... to turn this centre into a global seat of Jewish learning for a whole new generation." ■

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Funeral chapel takes death café idea to non-Jewish community

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

More than 50 people gathered at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in south Winnipeg late last month to talk about death and dying.

Divided into groups of five to eight, participants discussed and debated subjects such as assisted suicide, the nature of the soul and belief in an afterlife. Individuals spoke about the deaths of parents or children and how it affected them. Some also spoke about their own potentially fatal illnesses.

The evening was all part of Winnipeg's fifth Death Café, in which participants talked about death and dying over coffee and pastry. What was different this time is that the conversation brought together members of both this city's Christian and Jewish communities. Previous Death Cafes have been confined largely to the Jewish community.

In introducing the concept to participants, Rena Boroditsky, executive director of the Chesed Shel Emes, Winnipeg's non-profit Jewish funeral chapel which co-sponsored the evening, explained that the Death Café is an international movement that began in Europe with the objective of increasing awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their lives. The format, she noted, allows people to come together to talk about death and dying in an informal social setting.

Rena Boroditsky addresses Death Cafe participants MYRON LOVE PHOTO

> *We had a very positive response to the evening. We thought maybe 15 people might show up. We had 60.*

The Shaarey Zedek Synagogue played host to Winnipeg's first Death Café, which was co-sponsored by the Chesed Shel Emes, last January.

"We had a very positive response to the evening," Boroditsky said. "We thought maybe 15 people might show up. We had 60 people participate."

The Chesed Shel Emes has co-sponsored three more Death Café evenings in the Jewish community since then, and all have been equally well attended, Boroditsky said.

She added that Winnipeg's Death Cafés may have been the first in Canada to be hosted by a Jewish community. The most recent was co-sponsored by the Manitoba Interfaith Council.

The connection with the Manitoba Interfaith Council, she said, came about through Death Café organizing committee member, Ben Berkal. Berkal used to work at the Victoria Hospital and became acquainted with the chaplains at the hospital who are responsible for spiritual care.

Boroditsky said that she advertised the program with the Interfaith Council online and in a local newspaper.

She said the Death Café concept is a non-denominational, non-profit activity that has appeal for people from all religious traditions.

The format for this interfaith Death Café was slightly different than from the previous sessions, she said.

The evening began with a presentation from one of the participants on how losing a son to sudden death, having a daughter with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) and his own cancer diagnosis four years ago affected his own views on life and death.

The evening as always concluded with facilitators at each table summarizing the discussions around the tables. ■

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Man sues chassidic schools, gov't for poor education

CJN STAFF
MONTREAL

A 36-year-old former member of the Tash chassidic community is suing two Jewish schools, the Quebec education ministry and other public bodies for $1.2 million for damages he claims to have suffered due to the poor education he received in those schools.

Yonanan Lowen claims that the two schools he attended growing up in the Tash community in Boisbriand, north of Montreal, ill-equipped him for modern society, let alone making a living.

The father of several children, he said he cannot find work outside the chassidic community. He left the Tash community in 2010 before moving to Montreal.

He said he can barely read and write, knows no French, has a poor grasp of English, and little knowledge of mathematics, history or geography.

The schools cited are Yeshiva Beth Yehuda and Oir Hachaim d'Tash rabbinical college. Also named in the lawsuit are the local Youth Protection Department and the Commission scolaire La Seigneurie des Mille-Iles, the area's public school board.

Yonanan Lowen CBC SCREENSHOT

He claims the ministry and these bodies knew for years that these schools were not following the mandatory provincial curriculum, but did nothing.

He blames them for depriving him of the basic secular education guaranteed to all Quebec children between ages six and 16 under the law. Both schools have been under investigation for the past half-dozen years by the government for not respecting the law.

Lowen's suit refers to protection under the Public Education Act and the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

> *The school and the college operate openly without the competent authorities intervening to have them closed or ensuring that they provide the obligatory pedagogical regime*

"The school and the college operate openly without the competent authorities intervening to have them closed or ensuring that they provide the obligatory pedagogical regime foreseen by the Ministry of Education of Quebec," his suit reads.

He claims the two Tash schools duped parents into believing their children were receiving the legally prescribed education.

Lowen was born in London, England and came with his family to Boisbriand when he was 10.

Although he now teaches a few hours each week at a synagogue, Lowen says he suffers from depression and obsessive compulsive disorder.

Lowen said he decided to launch the suit after hearing of the agreement reached earlier this month between the education department and another chassidic school, the Satmar community's Yeshiva Toras Moshe Academy, which had been facing closure because it was operating illegally. Under this agreement, the school will cease all but its religious educational activities, and the students, who are at the elementary level, will be schooled at home, according to the provincial curriculum.

Lowen told Ici Radio-Canada this is a "farce" because these parents also never received an adequate secular education.

Efforts to reach Lowen for comment were unsuccessful.

Moishe Mayerovitch, head of Ecole Talmud Torah de Tash, the central educational institution for boys of the community, did not return a phone call from *The CJN* for comment. According to earlier media reports, this establishment does not have nor has never sought a permit to operate as a school, even though about 300 children ages three to 13 attend it exclusively.

The office of Education Minister Yves Bolduc has said it will not comment on Lowen's legal action. ■

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Jewish health, social institutions threatened by Quebec reforms: brief

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The Quebec government's proposed sweeping overhaul of the province's health and social services will have a detrimental effect on Jewish institutions' ability to raise funds and attract volunteers, according to a brief submitted to the parliamentary committee studying Bill 10.

In fact, the Jewish community fears that the institutions' very religious and cultural identity is at risk and that they could lose control over physical assets and even their names.

Under the proposed legislation, the five health and social services institutions on the Island of Montreal with deep roots in the Jewish community would lose their individual legal status and be administered, along with five other institutions in the West End, by a single, government-appointed board.

The sixth, the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital (JRH) in Laval, would similarly be grouped with institutions in that city.

Overall the number of separate institutions in the province will be reduced from 182 to 28, and the regional health and social service agencies will be eliminated completely, saving $220 million annually, according to the government.

The creation of these mega-organizations, called Centres integrés de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS), would "severely compromise fundraising and volunteerism, since longstanding donors and volunteers would not feel the same loyalty and kinship to substantially reorganized and modified versions of their institutions," stated the joint brief submitted Nov. 18 by the Jewish General Hospital (JGH), Maimonides Geriatric Centre, Mount Sinai Hospital, Miriam Home and Services, Jewish Eldercare Centre, JRH, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and Federation CJA.

The JGH, in particular, would have difficulty recruiting top clinical staff and researchers from elsewhere in Canada and around the world, the brief stated, because its individual reputation would be "overshadowed by and subservient to the CISSS.

"Prospective recruits would... be reluctant to join the JGH, given the deterioration of the hospital's academic mission through the loss of its supra-regional status."

The community is worried because the bill, tabled by Health Minister Gaétan Barrette in September, does not contain any explicit safeguard for the distinct religious or cultural identity of institutions, or for their bilingual status.

The Jewish General Hospital is concerned that it won't be able to recruit top professionals if it loses its individual identity under Bill 10.

"It is only a matter of time before donors and volunteers will begin to wonder why they owe any allegiance to an institution whose values and direction are dictated from above and are no longer consistent with many decades of history and tradition," the brief states.

Article 14 stipulates that when appointing board directors, the health minister "must take into account adequate representation of the various parts of the territory served by the institution and consider the sociocultural, ethnocultural, linguistic and demographic composition of the user population."

Article 131 also allows the minister to set up an advisory committee "charged with making recommendations to the institution on the measures to be implemented to preserve the cultural, historic or local character."

The community believes this is inadequate, and offers no protection "against the possibility of arbitrary and unfair changes by a future government. Nor is any protection provided to the institutions that would give them the ability to retain control over their corporations, assets, names and branding."

The brief notes that the JGH foundation is the second-largest of its kind in Quebec.

On the positive side, the community says it supports the bill's aim of making the system more efficient, both financially and in the delivery of care.

The brief describes the proposed reform as possibly "the greatest modern transformation in the delivery of health care and social services... since the introduction of medicare [in the 1960s.]."

The brief's authors recommend that the Jewish institutions, and others in central Montreal, remain distinct legal entities with their own boards of directors, which would be accountable to the new CISSS. As they are all volunteers, there is no cost to the public purse, it is pointed out.

Under the bill, the five Montreal Jewish institutions would be administered by the CISSS du Centre-de-l'Ile-de-Montréal, one of five CISSS groups on the Island of Montreal.

The authors of the brief say the institutions' own boards should be responsible for their clinical and research mission (including selection of professional administrators and clinical chiefs), preservation of the institution's distinct identity, the relationship with its foundation and with McGill University (where applicable), and suggesting nominations for the overarching CISSS board. They would retain the right to veto any mergers and responsibility for the disposal of assets.

The CISSS would have the authority to oversee the streamlining of services in the territory, the community recommends.

The community also wants the JRH to continue be a separate institution and to able to accept Jewish patients from Montreal – beyond its territory.

While Barrette, a physician by profession, has offered assurances that the rights of anglophones will be protected and that he will seek recommendations from the community in making appointments to the CISSS, the Jewish community believes these guarantees must be spelled out clearly in the law.

As it now stands, "the fate of member institution's bilingual status and the continuity of its special religious/cultural legacy depends upon the benevolence, compassion and understanding of those on a regional board or of the minister, and not directly upon the individuals who represent the member institution."

The federation is asking community members to sign the Quebec Community Groups Network's online petition to Barrette, which calls for the retention of all anglophone institutions' distinct character and autonomy, at http://bill10.com, as well to join the social media campaign at the Bill 10 Wrong Prescription Facebook page and comment on Twitter using the hashtag #bill10wrongprescription.

"Taking these actions will help let the minister know that members of the Jewish community stand with others who have serious concerns about the impact of the proposed reform," federation president Susan Laxer and CEO Deborah Corber said in an open letter. ■

Correction

In the article "A full-fledged bowling party and more" (*CJN* Celebrations supplement, Nov. 20), the phone number for Lucky Strike should have been 905-760-1868. We regret the error.

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Who's to blame for Jerusalem synagogue attack?

BEN SALES
JTA, TEL AVIV

After a gruesome attack by two Palestinian cousins left five dead at a Jerusalem synagogue, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu singled out one person for blame: Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

In a statement issued by his office, Abbas denounced the Nov. 17 attack, saying he "condemns the killing of civilians no matter who is doing it." But over the past few weeks, as a string of violent attacks have unsettled Jerusalemites, Abbas has issued statements some see as encouraging violence against Israelis.

In late October, he called for a "day of rage" over the temporary closure of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, saying the move amounted to a "declaration of war." Days later, he called the shooter of Jewish Temple Mount activist Yehuda Glick a "martyr" in a letter to the attacker's family.

"This is the direct result of the incitement being led by Hamas and Abu Mazen, incitement which the international community is irresponsibly ignoring," Netanyahu said following the synagogue attack, using Abbas' nom de guerre. "We will respond with a heavy hand to the brutal murder of Jews who came to pray and were met by reprehensible murderers."

In the attack, the two Palestinians entered a synagogue in a haredi neighborhood of Jerusalem and attacked worshippers with a gun and butcher knives.

Four Israeli rabbis were killed in the attack: Moshe Twersky, 59, head of the Toras Moshe Yeshiva in Jerusalem and a grandson of Rabbi Joseph Soleveitchik, the founder of modern Orthodoxy; Kalman Levine, 55; Aryeh Kupinsky, 43; and Avraham Goldberg, 68.

Rabbis Twersky, Levine and Kupinsky were dual Israeli and American citizens; Rabbi Goldberg was an Israeli and a British citizen. Eight others were wounded, including a Canadian, Howie Rothman.

An Israeli Druze police officer – Zidan Saif, 30, of the Druze village of Kfar Yanouch in the Galilee – died of wounds suffered during the shootout with the assailants.

The assailants, members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, were killed by Israeli police at the scene.

Despite Abbas' condemnation, Israeli politicians and American Jewish groups admonished him for inciting the violence.

"There's hypocrisy at work here," Finance Minister Yair Lapid said in an interview with i24 News. "You cannot incite in the evening and condemn in the morning."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking from London, referred to the attack as "an act of pure terror," and called for an end to Palestinian incitement, though he didn't mention Abbas by name.

"To have this kind of act, which is a pure result of incitement, of calls for days of rage, of just an irresponsibility, is unacceptable," Kerry said at a news conference Tuesday. "So the Palestinian leadership must condemn this, and they must begin to take serious steps to restrain any kind of incitement that comes from their language."

In the West Bank, a senior official from Hamas' political echelon told a visiting journalist that he found the attack encouraging. The attack appeared to be a spontaneous response to Israeli actions, the Hamas official said, not a co-ordinated assault organized by the military wing of Hamas.

"Hamas has been trying for a long time, but particularly since the summer, to foment and incite unrest in Jerusalem and the West Bank," the journalist, Neri Zilber, now a visiting scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said of his meeting with the Hamas official, whom he declined to identify by name. "It's obviously a high Hamas interest to foment this type of instability to keep the Palestinians in the West Bank rising up against both Israeli authorities and Palestinian authorities, which they see as going hand in hand."

Zilber, who meets regularly with Hamas political figures and has written for the *Washington Post*, the *Atlantic* and *Foreign Policy*, said the attack wasn't unexpected given the current environment in Jerusalem.

"You have an escalating pattern of lone wolf attacks, and I think it was only a matter of time before a bigger attack materialized," he said.

Some analysts say placing the blame on Abbas is a mistake. They point to the Palestinian president's longtime opposition to violence as well as the Palestinian Authority's ongoing security co-operation with Israel, which some credit with preventing the recent unrest from spiralling into a full-blown uprising.

"From the perspective of the Palestinians, every Palestinian that is killed in the conflict with Israel, no matter the circumstances, is thought of as a martyr," said Itamar Radai, a research fellow at Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center. "Abu Mazen lives in his society. There are codes he can't completely break."

Radai said recent statements by Abbas should be understood as a reflection of his frustration with Israel and his efforts to curry favour with his constituents.

The day of the attack, Yoram Cohen, the head of Israel's Shin Bet internal security service, told the Knesset's foreign affairs and defence committee that "Abu Mazen isn't interested in terror and isn't causing terror," according to Israeli reports.

"Mr. Abbas is a true partner of Israel who wants peace," said Munib al-Masri, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Legislative Council. "We are fed up with occupation. We don't want harassment in our holy sites. We want to sit down and talk about this."

But Mordechai Kedar, an analyst at Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said Abbas only opposes violence when speaking to an international audience and that his inflammatory Arabic pronouncements show his true position.

"Within the Palestinian Authority, he calls for violence," Kedar said. "In English, they speak with one mouth and in Arabic they speak with a different mouth. He can't clearly say, 'Go kill Jews,' but he says it in an unclear way." ■

JTA's Uriel Heilman contributed to this report.

GILI ELIYAHU/JINIPIX/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Righteous Gentile

Family and friends of Master-Sergeant Zidan Saif, the Druze policeman who died from wounds sustained in the synagogue attack, mourn at his funeral. The haredi community determined that Saif was a "Righteous Among the Nations," and many urged the public to attend his funeral, even arranging free transportation from the Jerusalem International Convention Center.

OPINION

Yoreh – the season's first rain

Sagi Melamed

There's something special about the *yoreh*, Israel's first rain of the year. Something consoling, encouraging, hopeful.

The first rain is even more significant after a dry, tempestuous and cruel summer like the summer of 2014.

The first rain signifies the transition from dry, grey, sharp-edged and cracked to green, colourful, tender, smooth-edged and at peace.

The first rain in Israel brings with it promise.

When my wife and I took our Shabbat afternoon walk on the hills around Hoshaya after the first rain this year, I was reminded of the words of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov: "If you believe you can damage, then believe you can repair."

The dark Galilee soil was still cracked from the summer aridity, but the purple crocuses were already sprouting, like little girls scattering rose petals before the bride on her way to the chupah and calling, "Here comes the bride!"

The crocuses, the cyclamen leaves that emerge from clefts in the rocks, the grasses that are starting to carpet our countryside, the daffodil trumpets, the asphodels, the hyacinths and all the other winter plants bring with them hope and consolation.

But nature can also deceive. Beneath the colours still lies the same divided land. The same piece of ground. Under the same sky. The first rain brought forth a covering for the scars of the past summer, but underneath the scabs, the wounds still bleed.

The Arab town Kafr Kanna, a mere stone's throw from Hoshaya, has a significant place in the history of the three Abrahamic religions. For example, it is the location of Jesus' first miracle and is an important station on The Jesus Trail that runs from Nazareth to Capernaum.

The Nov. 8 death of Khair Hamdan from Kafr Kanna, who was shot by police after he attacked them, ignited a storm of violent protests in the Israeli Arab community. The background to the protests is the enormous tension within the Arab community, tension that roils like lava in an active volcano. If not for this tension, the incident would have ended with determining whether the police officer committed an error of judgment. But given the background, many in the Arab community claim it shows Arab blood is cheap.

Israeli Arabs live under almost unbearable pressures. On one hand, their Jewish neighbours and Israeli institutions are covertly – or even overtly – suspicious of their loyalty, and they experience more difficulties than their Jewish colleagues with employment, education and housing. On the other hand, members of the Palestinian community (to which they are related not just by language, history and culture, but also by family) suspect Israeli Arabs of collaborating with the enemy and of not identifying sufficiently with the Palestinian people and their suffering. And last, the Israeli Arab community has to cope with the same challenges of life that every Israeli faces. The Gaza war this summer only exacerbated the tension, suspicion and pressures on Arab Israeli citizens.

Based on the three-letter root of the word *yoreh*, one of the meanings our sages gave is "the rain that teaches (*moreh*) people they need to cover their roofs, gather in their fruit and take care of all their needs." The *yoreh*, the first rain, tells us we must prepare for winter and seal up the weak spots through which rain can drip into the home. It is the wake-up call signalling the arrival of winter.

The challenge of Arabs and Jews living together in Israeli society is already well past the point where it needs a "*yoreh*" to signal its arrival. It has been clearly threatening for a long time. The heavy rains of the *yoreh* that heralded the start of this coming winter only exposed the contradiction between the glorious colours that cover the ground and the sensitive nerves of Israeli society, which last summer were left more exposed and vulnerable than ever. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 27, 2014

What you need to know about Jewish state bill

JTA
TEL AVIV

Coalition leaders decided Monday to delay for one week the vote on the controversial "Jewish state" bill that would enshrine in law Israel's identity as a Jewish state, as ministers vowed to continue to oppose the measure, even if it meant their jobs.

Yisrael Beitenu member of Knesset Robert Ilatov initially proposed the move, which was backed by the Jewish Home party at a meeting of the coalition partners.

The decision to delay the vote came just hours after Justice Minister Tzipi Livni reiterated her intention to fight the controversial proposal, and challenged the prime minister to decide whether it is worth it to break up his coalition over the law.

"This law will not pass because we are not ready, and I am not prepared to be a fig leaf for something so problematic," Livni told *Ynet* news earlier Monday. "And if it goes [to a vote] on Wednesday, I will not let it pass and will not compromise regarding its wording.

"The prime minister will have to decide whether he will fire ministers in his government and topple his coalition over their opposition to a law that goes against a Jewish and democratic Israel.

"If he wants elections over this, no problem."

With Arab-Jewish tensions running high in Israel, supporters of the bill say it will reinforce Israel's Jewish character. Opponents fear it will stoke the flames of the conflict.

Here is what you need to know about the bill and its prospects:

What is the Jewish State bill?

The bill makes clear that Israel is the state of the Jews or, in the words of the bill, "defines the State of Israel's identity as the nation-state of the Jewish People." Among other things, it means that Jewish law should inspire its legal system and that Israel's national holidays will be the Jewish holidays plus Independence Day and Memorial Day. The bill affirms that the country's national anthem is *Hatikvah* and that its flag is the blue-and-white star and stripes. For good measure, the bill also affirms the Law of Return, which gives automatic citizenship to any Jew who wants it.

Some of the bill's sections are already law. But the nation-state law would become one of the so-called Basic Laws, which, like a constitution, guide Israel's legal system and are more difficult than regular laws to repeal.

Justice Minister Tzipi Livni

The bill makes clear that Israel is the state of the Jews or, in the words of the bill, "defines the State of Israel's identity as the nation-state of the Jewish People.

Two drafts of the nation-state law have been proposed recently by right-wing lawmakers. The one on the table now is a compromise formulated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. The earlier version would also have defined Hebrew as Israel's sole national language, giving Arabic a secondary status, and affirmed the importance of settlement throughout Israel's borders – a term that was not defined.

Everyone knows Israel is a Jewish state. Why is the nation-state law necessary?

Supporters say it's because Israel's Jewishness has never really been made into law.

Judaism is mentioned throughout the country's laws, and religious authorities control some ceremonies, including marriage. But the 11 existing Basic Laws deal mostly with state institutions such as the Knesset, the courts or the presidency, and Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty defines Israel's democratic character. The nation-state law, proponents say, will place Jewish values and democratic values on equal footing.

"Although there is wide agreement in the Israeli public regarding the State of Israel's definition as a Jewish state, the characteristics of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish People were never anchored in the state's foundational laws," Likud MK Zeev Elkin wrote in the earlier version, which he composed.

Netanyahu has long demanded that the Palestinian leadership recognize Israel as a Jewish state, something it has refused to do. Elkin wrote that the law "is doubly important, especially in times when some seek to negate the right of the Jewish people to a national home in its land."

Why is the bill so controversial?

Opponents of the bill worry that it will prioritize Israel's Jewish character over its democracy.

Israel's declaration of independence defines it as a Jewish and democratic state, a dual mandate that has sometimes been a tough balancing act for the country. The opponents worry that the bill will further alienate Israel's Arab minority, who make up about a fifth of the population, fomenting discord in Israel and giving ammunition to Israel's detractors.

In particular, some Israeli legal scholars oppose sections of the bill that say legislation should be inspired by Jewish law and that courts should look to Jewish law in cases where civil law provides no clear answer.

"Israel is a nation-state whose vision has three essential ingredients: Jewishness, democracy and human rights," Hebrew University law professor Ruth Gavison wrote in a government-commissioned report on the bill that was released this week. "The nation-state law is likely to upset the essential balance of safeguarding the entire vision."

If the bill becomes law, what concrete changes would follow?

None, really.

The bill aims to set out general principles and safeguard existing legislation, so it doesn't create any new laws. But because it would be a Basic Law, its principles would guide the rest of Israel's legal system.

Amir Fuchs, the head of the Defending Democratic Values project at the Israel Democracy Institute think tank in Jerusalem, says the law will make it easier for discriminatory laws to pass Knesset and stand up in court.

"The goal here is to change the balance from where we have too much democracy, too much liberty and not enough Judaism," he said, explaining supporters' views. "If you want to pass a law that discriminates against Arabs, now you can claim that the [Arab-Israeli] demographic threat [to a Jewish majority] justifies the law."

How has the government addressed the concerns? Will the bill pass?

Supporters of the bill say opponents are mischaracterizing it. They note that the measure explicitly refers to Israel's democratic character and affirms "the personal rights of all its citizens according to law."

Centre-left members of Netanyahu's coalition opposed previous versions of the bill such as Elkin's. But Netanyahu's draft is aimed at compromise. Unlike the Elkin version, which Justice Minister Tzipi Livni came out against, the Netanyahu version has stronger language protecting democracy, and removes the portions on Jewish settlement and the primacy of Hebrew. ■

With files from Times of Israel TimesofIsrael.com

Joining hands to end extremism and support peace

SHAHID AKHTAR AND
BARBARA LANDAU
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jews and Muslims around the world are reeling from the escalating violence that is distorting the teaching of both our faith communities. Once again we find ourselves condemning a brutal act of violence in the Holy Land. Once again we see Jews and Muslims struggling to come to grips with events occurring half a world away, yet impacting us in Canada as if these were taking place in our own places of worships.

In this emotionally charged atmosphere, opinions are polarized and feelings are raw. Jews call it a massacre and put the blame squarely on the shoulders of Palestinians and Muslim religious extremists. Muslims link this horrific attack to occupation, illegal settlements, demolition of homes, social injustice, inequalities and loss of hope and dignity.

As violence escalates, so does anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Both groups feel increasingly vulnerable, criticized and under attack. At this time, Jews and Muslims of goodwill who hope for a peaceful and secure world for our children and grandchildren need to stand together against hate-mongering and extremism – and call for mutual respect and non-violence.

We strongly believe that to combat the scourges of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, we have to address the sources of tension and then try to do something about them. We must be open to difficult conversations within and between our communities to understand what fuels extremism – and condemn those who incite violence. As respectful partners, we need to avoid offering those who spew provocative and hate-filled rhetoric a platform in our religious institutions.

What happened in Jerusalem must not be allowed to divide Jewish and Muslim communities in Canada. Just the opposite – the Canadian model should be exported to the Middle East so that adversaries can see how a commitment to understanding and peace can achieve desired results.

This can only be achieved if Jews and Muslims embrace each other's common humanity. Our core belief is that we are all equals; that the life of a Jewish child is as precious as that of a Muslim child; that the grief of a Muslim mother is as intense as that of a Jewish mother; and that kidnapping, imprisonment, murder and acts of violence are horrendous when committed by one group or the other. We cannot justify violence of one and condemn the other.

> *We have to address the sources of tension and then try to do something about them.*

We believe that no matter how intense the situation, dialogue is always possible. To listen is to understand and demonstrate respect – even if we disagree. Unless we learn to talk to each other, nothing fruitful can come about. We must choose to move forward instead of remaining stuck in the negative narrative that divides us.

Some will use this tragedy to polarize our communities and fan the flames of hatred. But we must stand together to raise our collective voices against bigotry and prejudice, and to pressure opinion-makers, governments, communities and religious leaders to adopt fairness, justice and peace as their overarching principles. Standing together would be a wonderful way to effectively address our shared desire for peace, security and mutual respect as Jewish and Muslim Canadians. ■

Shahid Akhtar and Barbara Landau are co-chairs of the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims. CAJM was created 18 years ago as the first bilateral Jewish and Muslim organization in North America and offers a venue where Jews and Muslims can come together.

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VAUGHAN

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Monday, December 1, 2014

Terrace Banquet Centre
1680 Creditstone Road, Vaughan, ON
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Official ceremony will be broadcast
at the reception venue
beginning at 7 p.m.

Mayor and Members of Council will be joining
the reception following the official ceremony

Refreshments • 8:30 p.m.

vaughan.ca

Rabbi's anti-Arab blog post deleted

BEN SALES
JTA, NEW JERSEY

The rabbi of a major modern Orthodox synagogue in New Jersey has written a blog post that calls for Israel to collectively punish Arab Israelis and Palestinians until they realize "they have no future in the land of Israel."

In the post, written Nov. 21 and titled "Dealing with Savages," Rabbi Steven Pruzansky of Congregation Bnai Yeshurun in Teaneck offers suggestions that range from destroying whole Palestinian towns to uprooting the Dome of the Rock.

"There is a war for the land of Israel that is being waged, and the Arabs who dwell in the land of Israel are the enemy in that war and must be vanquished," Rabbi Pruzansky writes.

The post has since been deleted.

Rabbi Pruzansky refers to "the Arab-Muslim animals that span the globe, chopping, hacking and merrily decapitating," and then writes, "At a certain point, the unrestrained behaviour of unruly animals becomes the fault of the zookeeper, not the animals."

So what should Israel do? According to Rabbi Pruzansky, essentially end civil and human rights for many Arab Israelis and Palestinians. Beyond killing all terrorists and demolishing their extended families' homes, Rabbi Pruzansky says Israel should destroy entire Arab villages if more than one terrorist comes from them. All the residents of those villages, he writes, should be expelled.

He also writes that rioters and stone-throwers should be shot with live ammunition, and that reporters should be barred from these scenes and have their cameras confiscated.

Rabbi Pruzansky says Arabs should be barred from the Temple Mount for at least six months, and muses that "perhaps the day will come in the near future when the mosque and the dome can be uplifted intact and reset in Saudi Arabia, Syria or wherever it is wanted."

Rabbi Pruzansky writes that Palestinians and Arab Israelis as a whole are Israel's enemy – "and that enemy rides our buses, shops in our malls, drives on our roads and lives just two miles from us." ("Us" apparently doesn't include Rabbi Pruzansky himself, who leads a congregation 5,000 miles from Jerusalem.)

This isn't the first time Rabbi Pruzansky has made the news for his views. Earlier this month, he compared *The New York Jewish Week* to *Der Sturmer*, a Nazi newspaper. Rabbi Pruzansky's congregation, Bnai Yeshurun, has about 800 member families, according to its website, and has been led by Rabbi Pruzansky for more than 20 years.

Near the end of his post, Rabbi Pruzansky wonders why Israelis haven't come to the same conclusions he has. It's an "enduring enigma," he says. ■

Democracy and Jewish values can co-exist

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Jews have adopted democracy as the best approach to government, as evidenced by the State of Israel itself and by the way our institutions in the Diaspora operate. In fact, most Jews are comfortable that democratic values are consistent with Jewish values, even though they are not necessarily the same at all times.

Of course, there are challenges to overcome in order to ensure that the forces of Jewishness do not overpower the forces of democracy and vice versa. Virtually all western democracies were established with Christian values in evidence, and until the more recent rise of secularism, such states could easily have been defined as both Christian and democratic without attack. Necessary separation of church and state has ensured acceptable coexistence. One wonders why the same evolutionary approach comes under such attack and scrutiny when it occurs in Israel, and why there is so little appreciation for the fundamentally strong elements of democracy evident in Israel.

This issue need not be divisive among Jews. Those who have invested in Israel as the nation state of the Jewish People, either in Israel or from the Diaspora, did so in order to form and maintain a Jewish state. Otherwise, why bother?

And yet, a state that is for the Jews but also includes minorities must, in order to maintain a healthy democratic essence, adapt itself to also meet the needs of those minorities. Indeed, special regard must be paid to non-Jews in Israel who feel excluded because of the Jewish nature of the state. There are already success stories in Israel's Christian-Arab communities, where levels of education and achievement are as high as or higher than among the Jewish majority. The comfortable relationship with the Druze is another bright light. There are more difficult issues remaining with the Muslim and Arab minorities, but they are not going to be solved by limiting the Jewishness of Israel.

Israel is under attack in too many ways to list here. The strong desire to repel such attacks is the continuance of the reason why Israel exists – to be a Jewish state. That there must be other attributes of a healthy democratic state is without question. But this is a challenge of implementation, not policy.

Netanyahu has said he intends to enshrine in the nationality law "full equality before the law of every citizen regardless of religion, race or sex, alongside ensuring Israel's identity as the national state of the Jewish People. There is no contradiction between the two, and I will not allow these two basic principles to be undermined."

The intent of those words should be applauded, even as we add constructive suggestions to assist with the evolutionary process that must occur to reach such a laudable and necessary goal – a Jewish and democratic State of Israel. ■

Michael Diamond is a business consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He is involved extensively in Jewish and non-Jewish community life.

New bill threatens founders' vision of Israel

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Critics of the bill also say it undermines the peace process in general, and would kill the two-state solution for all time. Advocates of the bill raise their eyebrows in mock wonder: "Why should a Palestinian leader not welcome a bill that goes a long distance toward creating two discrete peoples populating the two states?" Either way, it is a pretty well acknowledged fact that no Palestinian leader could or would allow himself to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

Some critics claim the bill will add fuel to the fires of those who seek to construct the Third Temple on the site currently occupied by the Al-Aqsa mosque and Shrine of the Golden Dome. Government officials and some religious leaders have responded, mostly convincingly, by affirming the law that forbids Jews from praying on the Temple Mount.

And yet, a number of secular-Zionists I've spoken to during my month-long visit to Israel confessed to experiencing a sinking feeling these days. "I feel very much the way I did in the months and days preceding Yitzhak Rabin's assassination," a woman in her late-60s told me. Her husband, who served as deputy chief of the Mossad, said that, in his view, "the excesses and the corruption have reached unbearable levels. Operation Protective Edge accomplished none of its expressed goals. The nation-state bill is all bells and whistles… not worthy of a second look."

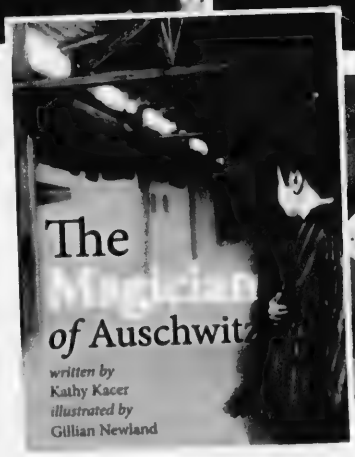
I don't agree. I think it's worthy of a second, a third and a fourth look, because the real significance of this bill is its undeclared target: Israel's founding secular-Zionist movement. Israel's original vision was purposefully given no definition so that future generations could engage with it creatively to form identities in accord with the image they saw in their own mirror. This bill will change that forever.

The nation-state bill risks the very wellsprings upon which the State of Israel was built. It represents, in its hubris, a triumph for those who seek to brand the present with the stamp of eternity. It inscribes the death of one vision for Israel, and the birth of a new one. ■

David Berlin is the founding editor of The Walrus magazine.

Jewish Life

Kacer combines magic and Auschwitz in her latest book



Kathy Kacer, top left, and with Werner Reich, bottom right. PHOTO COURTESY KATHY KACER

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The notion of a magician in a concentration camp sounds like fantasy, yet the premise of Kathy Kacer's new children's book is based on a true story.

The Magician of Auschwitz (Second Story Press), published in September, is the Toronto author's 18th book that has published about the Holocaust; 17 of those have been for young readers, one for adults.

Her first book, *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser*, published in 1999, relays the true account of her mother hiding in a dresser in the former Czechoslovakia while Nazi soldiers scoured the house looking for her.

Not surprisingly, Kacer, 60, a former psychologist who began writing fulltime 15 years ago, is herself the child of survivors, reared on stories of her parents' survival.

Kacer's mother ultimately survived the war by hiding, while her father was a survivor of the concentration camps; neither lived long enough to read any of the books she's written.

"My parents were talkers," Kacer said. "They were always very open about their experiences...I think they'd be quite amazed if they knew that so many young people read my stories [today], and that I've had books published in over 20 countries."

The Magician was inspired by the experiences of Werner Reich, now 87, who'd found himself alone as a teenager in Auschwitz where he befriended a fellow prisoner named Herbert Levin.

Levin had, before the war, been a famous magician in Berlin who'd gone by the name Nivelli and who ultimately survived Auschwitz by performing magic tricks for the camp guards.

The book tells of the bond that formed between them, and of Levin sharing with Reich the secrets of some of his magic tricks.

Upon hearing of these events, Kacer was hooked.

"I feel like I have this radar that goes off when a particular story just resonates with me," she explained. "This story takes place in one of the worst possible places, but what is remarkable about it is that it's a story about hope, friendship and the gift of magic...Something about the horrible conditions of Auschwitz and the beauty of magic really compelled me to want to write about this."

Several years ago, she contacted Reich, who lives in Long Island, N.Y., with his wife, and began doing research for the book.

"He's the most wonderful, smart, vibrant, funny man," Kacer said. "When he told me the story [of what happened to him], he kept calling the magic he'd been taught 'a gift.' He said, 'In a place where I had nothing and got nothing, I received a gift from this man.' That really jumped out at me."

The two have kept up a friendship to this day.

"[After *The Magician* was published], Werner sent me the most beautiful flower arrangement with a note saying, 'Thank you for showing the world that someone can be kind.' I know he was referring to Nivelli's kindness towards him in Auschwitz," Kacer said, "But that's how I think of him. He's such a kind, lovely, warm man."

Kacer's books have clearly resonated with children and adults. Some of her books are taught in schools and she speaks periodically to students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, about the Holocaust.

As to the challenge of capturing horrific subject matter for young readers, Kacer said it's her job to find the balance.

"That's what I strive to do. I have to engage readers; I can't terrify them. I think after 18 books, I've learned to do a pretty good job of it, to let the history unfold in a way that's appropriate to the age and stage of development of readers."

This spring, Kacer will be mounting a play about the Holocaust that she wrote with her son, actor Jake Epstein, at the Harold Green Jewish Theatre.

She's currently in the middle of writing her first book that, though it deals with a difficult history, is not about the Holocaust, but about a young aboriginal girl sent to a residential school in northern Ontario. ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

CBC DOCUMENTARY *TWO OF A KIND* EXPLORES SUBJECT OF IDENTICAL TWINS

Toronto filmmaker **Leora Eisen** examines the mysteries of identical twinship in an upcoming CBC television documentary, *Two Of A Kind*. The film "examines the meaning of double identity and lets others feel what it's like to be part of this incredible and surprisingly complex relationship," said Eisen, who travelled as far away as Melbourne, Australia, to meet the twins featured in the film.

Unfortunately, the tale takes an unexpected and heart-wrenching twist: when Leora was barely a month into production, her twin sister, **Linda Lewis**, received a shocking medical diagnosis. The film airs on CBC's *The Nature of Things*, Thursday, Nov. 27, 8 p.m.

Leora Eisen and Linda Lewis as kids

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Chai Tea and a Movie: Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents *Felix and Meira* (Canada 2014), a story of a young married chassidic woman (**Hadas Yaron**) with a child who marries an eccentric and penniless French Canadian (**Martin Dubreuil**) in Montreal. A sensitive love story between people from two distinct worlds, *Felix and Meira* won the Canada Goose Award for best Canadian feature film at the Toronto International Film Festival. $15 cash at the door. Cineplex Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Sunday, Dec. 14, 1 and 4 p.m. www.tjff.com,416-324-9121.

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Chanukah Hulyanke: Friends of Yiddish presents Chanukah Hulyanke, a concert of Yiddish song and klezmer music with the **Yiddish Swingtet**, with soloist **Kyra Folk-Farber**. The group consists of clarinetist **Jonno Lightstone**, pianist **Jordan Klapman** and guitarist **Tony Quarrington**. Refreshments, door prizes. $15, members $8 Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. (between Sheppard and Finch). Sunday, Dec. 14, 2 p.m. Please RSVP to 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca by Dec. 8

• • •

Shwekey in Concert: Acclaimed Israel-born musician **Yaakov Shwekey** headlines a concert to benefit Canada's NCSY, the youth movement of the Orthodox Union. The singer, who currently lives in New Jersey, is popular across the Diaspora and recently performed two sold-out concerts in Rio de Janeiro.

"Shwekey's music brings out the joy of Jewish experience and works hand-in-hand with our efforts to ensure that Jewish teens at this critical juncture of their lives feel pride in their Jewish identity," said **Rabbi Glenn Black**, chief executive officer of NCSY Canada. $72, $49. Toronto Center for the Arts, Sunday, Dec. 14. www.ncsyconcert.ca.

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Arts in Brief

• **Klezmology**, a klezmer trio consisting of **Jonno Lightstone**, **David Mott** and **Nick Fraser**, performs a free short concert at the Koffler Gallery at 8 p.m., just after the guided tour of the *Pardes* exhibit at 7:30 p.m. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Wednesday, Nov. 26. The next day, Lightstone presents part 2 of "Klezmer in the New World: A Musical Alchemy" at the Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, Nov. 27, 1:30 to 3 p.m. $15 drop-in.

• **Kevin Courrier** continues his series of music lectures with film clips on **The Beatles**. $12 drop-in, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, Dec. 1, 7 to 9 p.m.

• The Yiddish Vinkl presents **Mark Clayman**, co-chair of the Toronto Jewish Film Society, on how the society chooses which films to screen. $20 includes buffet lunch. Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Thursday, Dec. 4, noon. Please RSVP to yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca. ■

Second City meets the TSO with humour and song

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

As part of the Second City comedy troupe, Jewish comedian/singer Ashley Botting will perform songs and skits with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in *The Second City Guide To The Orchestra* Nov. 29 and 30.

The two-act show at Roy Thomson Hall features both music and sketch comedy. The Second City skits include a couple on a blind date at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, how classical music composer Gustav Mahler would have written commercial jingles, and the sexual prowess of a flautist, among others.

Selections from Beethoven, Mozart and Tchaikovsky will also be performed by the orchestra to round out the program of comedy and music.

"I have been looking forward to the collaboration for a long time," Botting said. "The stereotype of the classical music lover is the snob who does not laugh, and that's not true. The audiences will love to see the humour behind the classical music icons as well as hearing good music."

Botting has been earning standing ovations and favourable reviews for her performances and writing in sketch comedy, mostly for Second City, for the past decade. She currently is performing six nights a week in *Rebel Without A Cosmos* at Second City.

The 35-year-old sketch comedian/singer has honed her skills for over a decade, beginning her career after taking courses in comedy with Second City in 2004. She combines her flair for both music and humour in creating funny sketches using satirical songs.

Botting was highlighted in various Second City shows over the years, including *It's A Wonderful Toronto*, featuring songs and sketches involving Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and other local politicians, and *Sixteen Scandals* performed last March.

Botting has also travelled with Second City for other shows across Canada, and was memorable at the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, singing and performing sketches about composer Stephen Sondheim.

Born in Toronto, Botting was the class clown at the Claude Watson School for the Arts.

"I became interested in comedy as a way of being popular in school, as I was a chubby kid and wanted to gain attention. It came naturally for me to tell jokes, and it was a defence mechanism for me to improve my self-esteem."

Her songs and sketches, many based on Canadian political satire, garnered Botting three Canadian Comedy Awards from 2010 to 2012.

She is proud of her Jewish roots (her mother is Jewish, her father is not) and visited Israel in 2004 as part of the Birthright Israel program.

Oddly, Botting has never played an overtly Jewish character on stage.

"Toronto is not New York. If I was based in New York, there would probably be more sketch material involving Jewish characters, but I am not sure Canadians would identify with Jewish characters or humour."

Although Botting has spread her wings, doing voice-overs in cartoons and comic commentary on Canadian television, she does not intend to leave Canada for opportunities in the United States.

"I am aware that many who starred at Second City Toronto left for Hollywood, but I love Canada and feel comfortable living here for the rest of my life." ■

The Second City comedy troupe and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra perform in The Second City Guide To The Orchestra Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 30, 2 p.m., at Roy Thomson Hall. For tickets, call 416-593-0688 or go to www.tso.ca.

We would like to announce an opening of a brand new Judaica and Jewelry store
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Naomi Ragen discusses marriage, haredim, terrorism and lawsuits

Naomi Ragen FRANCES KRAFT PHOTO

FRANCES KRAFT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Naomi Ragen's passion for telling compelling stories in her bestselling novels can be traced back to her childhood. At six, living in a housing project with her widowed mother and two brothers, she determined that one day she would write a book about her life – a goal she achieved as an adult in a fictionalized version called *Chains Around the Grass*.

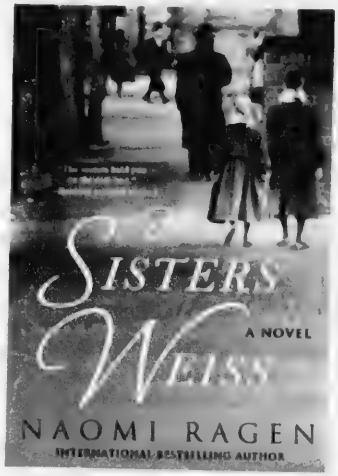
This month, Ragen was in Toronto, Winnipeg and Detroit as part of a speaking tour, and in Windsor, Ont. as a faculty member for an international writers' conference. She is best known for her books set in the haredi community, and her email list about Israel, which has 10,000 subscribers.

The 65-year-old Brooklyn-born, Jerusalem-based author, who made aliyah with her husband in 1971, was personable and forthcoming when discussing the differences between her life and that of some of her fictional characters in a recent wide-ranging interview.

"I have the nicest husband in the world!" she exclaimed, raising her hands and shaking them slightly in disbelief at the idea that people sometimes think otherwise, assuming that she's writing from experience rather than empathy.

Her first published novel, *Jephte's Daughter*, the story of a young haredi woman who flees an abusive marriage, was inspired by events in the ultra-Orthodox community that Ragen lived in as a young bride. The story does not reflect her own happy union of 45 years, she emphasized.

Naively, she believed initially that the ultra-Orthodox community would thank her for bringing difficult issues to light.



Without acknowledging problems, she explained, "you can't make progress."

Ragen, who became observant as a student at an Orthodox day school, said the Orthodox milieu in which her novels are set is her world. "I care about the people in it."

She believes that three lawsuits against her for copyright infringement are related to animosity on the part of haredim who object to the way she has portrayed their community.

She noted that some haredim are "the most wonderful, open-minded, kind, giving, charitable people" she has ever met, while others are "close-minded and dogmatic and violent and oppressive, and you can say the same thing about every society."

One lawsuit was dismissed, she appealed another with partial success, and the third was decided while Ragen was here, when she was ordered to pay around $21,000 to Sudi Rosengarten, who had written a memoir about her son's shidduch.

In the most recent case, Ragen said she based part of one chapter in her novel, *The Sacrifice of Tamar*, on Rosengarten's story. "I don't use more than two or three ideas from her story. I don't use the language in her story... I don't think I did anything wrong," she said. "Every fiction book depends on non-fiction material."

Her mistake, she said, was not acknowledging that she'd been inspired by Rosengarten's story at the time.

Ragen, who grew up on the works of Louisa May Alcott, Willa Cather, and Charles Dickens, said the topics of her books choose her, not the other way around. "They grab me, they hold me by the neck, and they say, 'You're going to write me.'"

Writing *The Covenant*, her 2004 novel about the Hamas kidnapping of a Jewish doctor and his young daughter, was particularly difficult for her. "I did not want to write that book," she said, recalling the anguishing week she spent with her friend and neighbour, Esther Wachsman, when Wachsman's son Nachshon was kidnapped, then murdered in 1994.

It became clear that Ragen could not avoid the topic after she and her family survived the Passover massacre at Netanya's Park Hotel in 2002.

Speaking to *The CJN* the same day as the recent Har Nof synagogue attack, Ragen said there can be "no answer" until Palestinians give up their weapons when entering Israel, and are re-educated to stop hating.

Despite an erosion of hope in the years since she moved to Israel, she said there is still "a thread of normalcy that I think is stronger than any incitement." Just recently, she noted, she saw an Arab man and a man with a kippah, together with their children at a park, interacting and laughing and smiling.

Although she often writes about bleak situations, as an Orthodox Jew she believes there is always hope.

Her 2013 book, *The Sisters Weiss*, which just came out in paperback, is the story of two haredi sisters who take divergent paths. "I talk about how this tears families apart, and what a tragedy that is, and how it's not necessary."

Her next book, which she expects will be published in November 2015, addresses the issue of cults in the haredi community. Related news stories involving abuse of children horrified her, and inspired the book. The book – like all her books – represents "an attempt to understand why these terrible things happen, and what we can do to prevent them."

For a reader, she believes, a book should "leave you a different person. You're supposed to know things about life, and about yourself, that you didn't know before." ■

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THOMAS (MINUK) ALI

Grazia Dei Rossi sequel is rich in atmosphere

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto-based writer Jacqueline Park is currently at work on the third panel of a formidable historical literary triptych.

The Legacy of Grazia Dei Rossi is the second instalment of the wide-reaching trilogy that depicts the storied, fictional lives of a remarkable woman, Grazia dei Rossi, whom we met in the introductory volume, and her son, Danilo, whose bold, adventure-soaked life unfolds in volume two.

Volume one, *The Secret Book of Grazia Dei Rossi*, begins at the start of 16th century Italy. Part two, *Legacy*, picks up the story near the midpoint of the century after Grazia's death. Fate – or rather, the creative exigencies of Park's literary imperative – casts young Danilo back to the sheltering home of his father, the renowned physician Judah Del Medigo.

No longer in Italy, father and son are now living in Istanbul, the beating heart of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, they are at the very epicentre of the empire, for Del Medigo is the sultan's personal physician. The Great Suleiman effectively conscripted Del Medigo to his service. And one did not generally refuse the Sultan's summons.

Del Medigo would prefer to leave the Sultan's employ to dedicate his time to raising and educating his son. The Sultan, however, is unwilling to release his physician-adviser-philosopher. This is especially the case since the Sultan insists Del Medigo be his "in-house-always-at-his-side" doctor on the military campaign the Sultan is planning to undertake to capture Vienna.

In his father's absence, young Danilo is placed in the harem school for royal children with the Sultan's mother serving as the boy's guardian.

Thus, Park puts in place the literary pieces that ultimately form a beguiling fiction that is equal part youthful, hotheaded romance and meticulous, detailed history.

At his new school, Danilo meets and befriends the Sultan's daughter, Saida. Not surprisingly, the friendship evolves into love, at first immature and innocent then inevitably, as it must, into something far more sophisticated and more urgent.

But the love between the two is forbidden: She is Muslim. He is a Jew. She is royalty. He is not. Their feelings must be hidden and furtive, a secret they can share with no one.

How the love affair survives amid the jealousies and intrigues of the Sultan's court and how it will resolve while Danilo himself is away with the Sultan on an arduous military effort to capture Baghdad, inform the dramatic tension that carries the reader to the end of story. There is, however, a great deal more to the story than the answer to the question: Will Danilo and Saida wind up together?

Indeed, the relationship between the young couple is merely the creative pretext for Park to write a broad, thoughtful exploration of the history, mores, customs and traditions of the Ottoman Empire and more particularly, of the severely controlled life within the Ottoman court.

The research underpinning the work is impressive. It touches upon various disciplines: historical, social, cultural, political and military.

For example, Park describes the education of future "civil servants" in the context of the uniquely Ottoman nature of rule and governmental organization, particularly in contradistinction to the system in Christian Europe.

"It was all work and very little play for the Sultan's pages. Seen through the eyes of someone like the Venetian *bailo* (emissary), the investment of thought, time, energy and money needed to keep this training school running seemed prodigious. But to the Ottoman sultans, this school was the bedrock of what foreigners called the Ruling Institution and what their subjects simply called the Sultan's *cul*, a governing caste of slaves who owed allegiance strictly to him. This *cul* was the unique invention that had enabled an obscure mongrel nomadic tribe to conquer, hold, and expand a sphere of influence exceeding the Roman Empire in less than 100 years.

"The speed of that transformation boggled the European imagination. Observing it from the west, it seemed as if one day the Osman tribe was a ragged band of *ghazi* march warriors and overnight became the scourge of Christian Europe. Having converted early on to Islam and changed their name from Osman to Ottoman, they attributed their remarkable rise to the beneficence of Allah. They saw their mission as a jihad against infidels. But they went at it with a stony pragmatism that owed more to Sun Tzu than to Mohammed. And like their Oriental forbears they seemed to have a gift for recognizing problems early and solving them without delay, often using methods borrowed from others, in particular their enemies."

The Legacy of Grazia Dei Rossi
By Jacqueline Park
House of Anansi Press Inc.

The book is a feast of concentrated, eye-opening detail. And the author is exceptionally qualified to make such exacting detail the centerpiece of her work. For Park is the founding chairman of the dramatic writing program and professor emerita at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She undertook this magnum literary opus in her later life, which to this stage has reached its 89th year.

Like she did in *The Secret Book of Grazia Dei Rossi*, Park here adopts a hybrid writing style combining straight narrative and the exchange of correspondence. The story itself is rich in atmosphere and context: perhaps even too rich. There could have been more swashbuckling and more intrigue, more life-threatening predicaments and life-saving action. The story would have benefited by more plot development involving Danilo, his father and the evil characters pitted against them.

The Legacy of Grazia Dei Rossi concludes with the introduction of a new character who mentions the real-life, strong and compelling figure of Dona Grazia Nasi. Park intrigues us with the suggestion that the continuation of Danilo's story in the final instalment of the trilogy might relate to the philanthropic and other achievements of the famous Nasi family. We can only hope, wait, and see. ■

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'Keeb' takes audiences on a worldwide journey

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

"I'm a Keeb," jokes Deb Filler. "A Kiwi Heeb," she says.

Filler claims to be New Zealand's only Jewish comedian. After working as a teacher, she left her hometown of Auckland in 1979 to study acting in New York City with Uta Hagen and Stella Adler. She's lived and performed in cities around the world, leading her to question: where is home?

That's the theme she's exploring in her latest one-woman show *I Lost It In Kiev*, which runs at Toronto's Factory Theatre until Nov. 30.

"For me, I've always been an outsider," says Filler. "So home has been many places." While growing up Jewish in New Zealand, her family was accepted, but still different than their mostly Irish, Scottish and Maori neighbours. Now that she lives in Toronto, she sometimes still longs for New Zealand.

In *I Lost It In Kiev*, Filler takes audiences on a journey from New Zealand, to a kibbutz in Israel, to Paris, to Canada and finally, to Kiev, where something intense happens to her. "But, that's a spoiler alert," she says.

"The stories are poignant," Filler explains. Her plays are never solely comedic. In 1990 she and her father, a Holocaust survivor, visited Poland on what Filler describes as a "whirlwind tour of eastern European death camps." She based her first show, *Punch Me In The Stomach*, on this trip.

Deb Filler

> *That was a real coup for me, doing Jewish jokes touring the heartland of New Zealand and them getting it.*

That show opened off-Broadway with Filler playing 36 larger-than-life characters, many of them based on members of her extended family. Her characters are eccentric, but ones we can all relate to. Anyone can imagine having a relative like her Aunt Zelda or Uncle Mendel.

She performed *Punch Me In The Stomach* internationally for 12 years, including a stint in Berlin, which she describes as amazing.

"My shows are not humorous pieces about the Holocaust," she says. However, Filler sees humour as healing. "We survive in the best way that we can," she says. "And sometimes, we need to find irony, or to find levity in a dark situation. And, I think that's part of the human condition."

Filler's parents didn't hide the past from their children. Her father was from the Polish town of Brzozow, about three-and-a-half hours southeast of Krakow. He survived Auschwitz and eventually moved to New Zealand where he opened a bakery. Her mother's family immigrated to New Zealand from Germany right before World War II. Filler remembers hearing her parents' stories at a young age.

Her parents, she explains, were never bitter about their experiences. "I've always felt very fortunate, almost like the baton has been passed to me to tell the story of the glass half full," she says.

She brings this perspective into her work. After *Punch Me In The Stomach*, she debuted *Filler Up!* In this show she played 27 characters and baked challah on stage, which she later served to her audience. She hopes to bring *Filler Up!* to New York City next year. She's also working on an original play with actress Marilyn Lightstone called *My German Roots Are Showing*. It's about her experience performing in Germany.

Along with acting and playwriting, Filler teaches at the post-secondary level, including a course on what she calls "shtick" in the comedy writing and performance program at Humber College.

Filler has lived in Toronto since the mid-1990s. While many Canadian audiences are comfortable with distinctly Jewish humour, Filler strives to find universality in her work. It's how she gets audiences laughing in places like rural New Zealand. "That was a real coup for me, doing Jewish jokes touring the heartland of New Zealand and them getting it," she says.

She recognizes that despite the content, everyone can relate to universal stories. By combining poignancy with comedy, she connects with audiences and allows them to make sense of troubling situations.

"That's what Jews do," she says. "We've learned how to make humour out of darkness." ■

I Lost It In Kiev runs Nov. 25-30 at the Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. For tickets: 416-504-9971 or factorytheatre.ca

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What's New

NOV. 27 - DEC. 4

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 27

MAIMONIDES AND HALEVI
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl discusses "Maimonides and Halevi: Convenant, conversion and who is a Jew," 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion.

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews *The Origins of Jewish Self Hatred*, by **Paul Reiter,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

YOUR DNA IS NOT DESTINY
Dr. Jennifer Pearlman discusses "Your DNA is not your destiny," 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. $10/$15.

Friday, Nov. 28

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE
Yossi Klein Halevi is the scholar-in-residence this weekend at Beth Sholom Synagogue. Friday night he will discuss "The future of peace in the Middle East." Saturday morning he will speak on "The future of Judaism in the State of Israel," and Sunday he will speak about "From Brooklyn to Jerusalem: A second-generation journey." To register email rivy@bethsholom.net or www.bethsholom.net.

50 WAYS TO BE JEWISH
Ira Schweitzer discusses "Fifty ways to be Jewish," Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 29

TORAH STUDY
Abe Birenbaum leads the Torah study at Beth Tikvah Synagogue this morning.

Sunday, Nov. 30

ART WORKSHOP & JEWS OF UGANDA
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a children's art workshop exploring the story of Noah, 11 a.m. $5/$10. RSVP agol@shaarshalom.ca. At 7:45 p.m., **Henry Silver** presents the story of the Jewish children of Mbale, Uganda.

Deadline Reminder:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 11 is Dec. 1. The deadline for the issue of Dec. 18 is Dec. 8. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Eitz Chaim parents, grandparents and students joined board members, supporters and staff to dedicate the new Spring Farm middle school wing on Nov. 16. Assisting with the ceremonial ribbon cutting are from left, Kurt Rothschild, Moshe Rubner, school president, MP Peter Kent and Rabbi Shimon Newman, campus principal.

ANTI-ISRAELISM ON CAMPUS
Nora Gold discusses her novel about anti-Israelism on campus, 10:15 a.m., Temple Sinai.

CRIME & GANGS IN CANADA
Mark Totten, professor of criminal justice, discusses "Organized crime and gangs in Canada," 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre, 4169 Bathurst St., with Singles in the Park, a group for single Jewish men and women over 50. RSVP debbygo@rogers.com or 416-631-0005. $15/$20.

PJ LIBRARY GOES TO CAMP
Enjoy a taste of Jewish summer camp with PJ Library, Prosserman JCC, 4588 Bathurst St., 2:30-4 p.m. Register at pjlibrarytoronto.ca/camp.

Monday, Dec. 1

VISION IMPAIRED CLUB
The VIP Club (Vision Impaired Persons) club is celebrating Chanukah, 7:30 p.m. at the Bernard Betel Centre, 1002 Steeles Ave. W. with music by **Yitzhak Argeman** and a dinner. $18/$21. RSVP **Bess** 905-508-2892.

AT THE BAYT
Music with Susan for newborns to 3 year olds is offered Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Teen dine and learn program Mondays at 7 p.m., Beth Avraham Yosef Congregation of Toronto. Call **Rich Winkler** 905-886-3810, ext. 135.

Tuesday, Dec. 2

LUNCH AND LEARN
Paulette Volgyesi discusses "My circle is closed," her journey to find the lost story of her father, Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, speaker at 12:30 p.m.

CHUG HATANACH
Rabbi Tina Grimberg discusses Psalms Chapter 27, at 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Wednesday, Dec. 3

ISRAEL'S CONSUL GENERAL SPEAKS
DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general to Toronto and western Canada speaks at Congregation Darchei Noam, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the congregation and JSpace Canada. Free, register at http://bit.ly/openconversation.

Thursday, Dec.4

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews *Jews and the Military: A History*, by **Derek Penslar,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

SMALL WONDERS
Small Wonders, which supports Jewish couples experiencing infertility, is hosting "A Night of Wonder" at Holt Renfrew, 50 Bloor St., **Dec. 8**. For tickets, visit smallwonders.ca or 416-742-0090.

WAR IN JEWISH POETRY
Morasha offers a class on "Images of war in Jewish poetry," taught by **Shayna Kravetz, Dec. 3** and **Dec. 10,** 10 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. **Loretta** 416-789-7400.

PREMIER SPEAKS
Ontario Premier **Kathleen Wynne** speaks at Temple Har Zion, **Dec. 7,** 7:30 p.m.

VINTAGE CLOTHING SALE
Koffler Centre for the Arts is holding a designer vintage clothing sale fundraiser, **Dec. 7-8**. To donate clothes, call 647-925-0645 or serdem@kofflerarts.org.

CHANUKAH PARTY
Toronto Workmen's Circle holds a Chanukah brunch with music by **Mitch Smolkin, Dec. 7,** 11 a.m. Free for members, $15 for guests. RSVP 416-787-2081 or email wcarto@yahoo.com by Dec. 2.

CHANUKAH CONCERT
Friends of Yiddish hold their Chanukah concert, featuring **The Yiddish Swingtet** and **Kyra Folk-Farber, Dec. 14,** 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $8/$15. RSVP by Dec. 8 to **Sandy** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca

INTERNSHIPS
Emunah Toronto is offering two internship opportunities for university students who would like to work in a religious Zionist setting at Neve Michael, an Israeli children's village, starting June 2015. Call 416-636-0036 or www.emunahcanada.org

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

HEBREW CLASSES

Conversational Hebrew, Ulpan method with **Yael Lev,** intermediates Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; advanced Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Two classes forming, learn to read and write and beginners conversational Hebrew. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN

The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.
- Dating in mid-life: A workshop for people over 40 who have been single for two years or more. Dec. 17, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Antiques appraisal roadshow. Bring your art, Judaica, jewelry and coins to our valuation clinic. $5 per item, Dec. 4., doors open at 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Pickleball, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colin@mnjcc.org.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 2, **Michael Klein** discusses "The world of dreams," 10 a.m.; Dec. 4, lecture on "Colours in our life," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah with live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Dec. 10; Seniors balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Mah-jong Dec. 4, noon.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin.** Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $20/$25. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Moving meditation meets Thursdays, starting Jan. 8, 10:30 a.m.
- **Kal Honey** will help you develop your artistic vision in this open media studio course, starting Mondays Jan. 5, 1 p.m.
- All levels welcome for hand building and wheel throwing courses starting January.
- Learn to play mah-jong, starting Jan. 21, 1 p.m.
- Bridge level 1 will be offered Mondays, 10 a.m. and bridge level 2 will be offered Thursdays, 10 a.m., starting January.
- **Suzanne Metz** presents "Mix it up with media," Thursdays, starting Jan. 8, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Register now for winter programs. Members registration open Dec. 3, non-members Dec. 10.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Mondays, 11 a.m. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Subscribe today to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January - December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Bring your own lunch and learn day, Nov. 27. Author **Howard Shrier** speaks at 11 a.m. At 1:30 p.m., **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Klezmer in the New World: A Musical Alchemy."
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the Beatles. Dec. 1, "Helter-Skelter: Counter-culture and mysticism," 7 p.m.
- Adult education about Shabbat, led by **Annie Matan,** Nov. 30, 9:30 a.m.
- KatKa Team for children in grades 2-6, Nov. 30, 1 p.m. sponsored by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror. Email Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- *Collective Memories* by **Peter Barelkowski** is in the gallery until Nov. 30.
- **Will Stroet,** star of CBC's *Will's Jams* performs Nov. 30, 11 a.m. For tickets, www.algreentheatre.ca or 604-727-4413.
- Israeli family kabbalat Shabbat, Nov. 28, 5:30 -7:30 p.m. $10 for adults, kids free. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or call ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- All levels welcome for adult ceramics, starts Jan. 7, 7 p.m.
- Enjoy a glass workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- Mah-jong classes start Jan. 13
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental Mix Media," starting Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
- PJ Plus is a parent and me program for ages 18 months to 3 years, Sundays starting Jan. 25, 10 a.m.
- Infant/Child CPR Level C course offered Dec. 2, 6-10 p.m. or Dec. 7, 3-7 p.m. ■

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SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Music can enhance your life at any age

Dr. Michael Gordon

As those who read this column regularly already know, I often get my writing inspiration from my ambulatory clinic. Recently, I had the opportunity to promote one of my favourite subjects with the caregivers of elders living with dementia: in both cases, a family member was not able to accompany their parent's visit.

During the discussion with the patients (up to the point that they could participate) and with the care-providers, both of whom had been with their clients for many years and had accompanied them to my office, I asked about their activities, including what they did at home, since each of them attended day programs a few times a week.

I asked about their access to music, and in both cases, I was told: yes, they had access, but in essence that meant the radio was on, tuned to a station that played music with no particular relevance to the person's past life, musical preferences or experience.

I explained to the caregivers the importance of playing music that was of unique importance to the patient in terms of familiarity and associations, a goal that could not be achieved with the radio.

To demonstrate my point, I did a quick search in one case for Internet sites with Yiddish music, and very quickly found a few sites. One site listed many songs that I recognized from my childhood when my maternal grandmother, who helped raised me and lived with me, exposed me to Yiddish songs. She did this through a combination of the songs she sang to me at bedtime and the fact that she was in a Yiddish choir, and when I was old enough, she had me accompany her on the piano while she rehearsed. She also took me to the concerts and to Yiddish language musicals (often with fabulous sets and dozens of singers), which I recall vividly.

The first piece I chose for my patient was one I assumed the patient would recognize, even with her profound dementia, as it was such a staple of Yiddish music that it has entered the musical lexicon of non-Jews as well.

I clicked the mouse, the music came on, and within moments that it took for the music to be recognized, a smile started to appear across her face and she started nodding her head to the music and tapping her foot, which the caregiver pointed out to me.

After that demonstration, I instructed the caregiver to explain to the daughter that she had to find a way to get a CD player and get some classical Yiddish CD discs and have them played for a period of time for her mother.

The second patient was Hebrew speaking and I repeated the process with Hebrew songs and observed the same response.

The impetus for my recommending music to patients living with dementia comes from a number of experiences. Much research has been done in many academic centres, including Baycrest, that demonstrate the neurobiology of music and how our brains are wired so that music is recognized and appreciated with the production of brain chemicals associated with pleasurable experiences.

And watching live musical programs at Baycrest that the patients and residents of the centre attend almost every week, we see many of the residents, patients and their caregivers responding to the music in an uplifting and poignant experience that includes singing and dancing and moving to melodies.

Lastly, there's a video, *Alive Inside*, about an elderly African-American man living in a nursing home, mute for a number of years. Music from his era (the '30s and '40s) was played to him through ear phones, and his response was almost miraculous in terms of an awakening of his senses and his verbal responses and accompanying singing.

Music is universally loved and appreciated. For those living with dementia and those providing care, it can provide stimulation and pleasure and enhance all aspects of caring. ■

Jeffrey & Britney

Steve and Donna Goldenberg are very excited to announce the engagement of their son Jeffrey to Britney Koblinsky, daughter of Kim Koblinsky and Ray Wegner and David and Elisabeth Koblinsky. Proud grandparents are Esther and Mark Goldenberg, Jean and the late Irving Wolfman, Doreen Schwalb, Gaston Schwalb and Andrea Himes and Florence (Bubbles) Koblinsky and the late Sam Koblinsky.

Family Moments

Linda & Roger Rashi, Marianne & David Portnoy are happy to announce the engagement of their children, Corinne & Jason. A fall wedding is planned.

Mazel tov to Elana & Michael on their engagement from Dorete Svikin & Erez Anzel, Lillian & Bobby Tolensky, all of the family, and their friends.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב

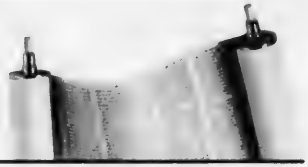
Mazel tov to Lorraine & Aubie Himmel on your 65th wedding anniversary from your loving children, grandchildren, family and friends.

Judith Ross celebrated her 80th birthday on Nov. 9. Her interests in choirs, shul, and Na'amat projects keep her busy! Mazel tov and love from all!

Mazel tov to Allyson Cooperman & David Jakobovits on their engagement Nov. 1. A 2015 wedding is planned.

Parshah

Vayetzei | Genesis 28:10 - 32:3



Yacov Fruchter says it's easy to see the image of God in others, more difficult to find it in ourselves
Rabbi Shalom Spira explains the long, complicated history of the term 'mazal tov'
Rachael Turkienicz investigates Jacob's relationship with the angels

Yacov Fruchter

While many people act and talk confidently, others are humble to a fault. What stops dedicated, gifted people from fulfilling their potential and achieving their goals? Many of us run away from our problems rather than facing them. What causes this and how can we change it?

Among the incredible stories in this parshah, I am most drawn to the first encounter between Jacob (Yaacov) and Rachel. In fact, before I proposed to my wife, we read this story together – particularly fitting as her Hebrew name is Rachel (and I am Yacov).

I love the image of Jacob, the timid, bookish patriarch who is so moved by the mere sight of the woman of his dreams that he singlehandedly rolls a boulder off the well and passionately kisses her without introducing himself. That's romance! Then, after this dramatic, intimate moment, he bursts into tears!

Imagine how confused Rachel must have been – perhaps self-conscious or even insulted by the man who is brought to tears just by kissing her?

Rashi quotes a midrash from Bereshit Rabbah explaining that the source of the tears is the realization that "I have come empty handed." His father's servant Eliezer offered gifts of jewelry to Rebecca, who would eventually marry Isaac, and Jacob has nothing of physical worth to offer.

It surprises me that he could have felt this way just moments after performing the superhuman act of removing the boulder on his own. Still, after bringing the gift of water, he was so consumed and embarrassed by his lack of wealth that he was overcome with grief.

The text makes no mention of Rachel's displeasure in not receiving jewelry. This was Jacob's own anxiety. Rachel saw the greatness and potential greatness in this dishevelled wanderer and knew that together they could build a nation.

It is often easy to see the image of God in the other, yet much more difficult to see that same Godly spark in ourselves. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And Leah said *gad* has arrived" (Genesis 30:11). Rashi, based on the Gemara in Shabbat 67b, translates *gad* as "mazal tov," or good luck.

An examination of that Gemara reveals that the term *gad* is one whose verbal invocation is actually forbidden to Jews, either because it emulates Noahide cultural practices or because it's idolatrous. Accordingly, Rabbi Aharon Yehudah ha-Levi Grossman, (*Teshuvot Ve-Darashta ve-Chakarta* III, *Even ha-Ezer* no. 15) is asked how it is that "mazal tov" has mysteriously entered our *Kiddush Levanah* liturgy.

Rabbi Grossman answers by pointing to Rabbi Yair Bachrach (*Teshuvot Chavot Ya'ir* no. 19) as the earliest source that legitimizes "mazal tov." Rabbi Grossman proposes that the blessing is based on Maharsha's commentary to the Gemara, Mo'ed Katan 28a, s.v. *be-mazala tal'ya*. Maharsha explains that although a human's physical destiny is already pre-determined in his/her embryonic DNA (as per the Gemara, Niddah 16b), nevertheless, through prayer and extraordinary merit, the same DNA (or "mazal") can sometimes be beneficially transcended. (To that effect, molecular biology has indeed discovered that the process of DNA transcription into mRNA and subsequent protein synthesis are wild-card factors whose ultimate yields are unpredictable.) Thus, the "mazal tov" blessing means that the normally anticipated influence of a Jew's DNA should be improved through halachically appropriate prayer and merit.

Alternatively, we might hypothesize an interpretation based on Artscroll's *Bircas ha-Chammah*. The latter volume suggests that the reason *Aleinu* is recited following *Kiddush Levanah* is to publicize that the celestial bodies are not being worshipped, but rather that they themselves give praise to the Holy One, blessed be He. (See the morning liturgy for the second day of Rosh Hashanah: "constellations (*mazalot*) and stars praise Him exceedingly, forever shall He reign.") Thus, we hope that, through our mitzvah performance, each celestial body (or "*mazal*") will be appreciated by humanity in the proper (*tov*) manner. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

This week's Torah portion describes Jacob's life journey as he leaves his home to live with his uncle, Laban. Jacob meets his future wives and builds what will become the tribes of Israel.

With all of these monumental themes, it's easy to overlook one of Jacob's specialties: he sees angels. Jacob dreams of angels and encounters them on his travels. He's not surprised to see them. Clearly, they're part of his world.

Eventually, these angelic encounters lead to the famous text of Jacob wrestling with an angel and gaining the name "Israel." Ultimately, in the future, as Jacob sees his life nearing its end, he utters some of the most profound words in Judaism: "The angel who redeems me should bless these young ones." We say these words every night when we say the *Shema*.

Jacob is the ancestor who teaches us about the angels. He dreams of angels going up and down a ladder, and the sages say these are patrolling angels changing shifts. Jacob encounters a camp of angels and decides to set his own camp there. These are the angels that dwell among us and interact with us to perform their missions.

Jacob wrestles with an angel and forces a blessing. One rabbi states that this is an angel that serves God and must sing at sunrise. Jacob's last lesson is to teach us of our redeeming angels who will give their lives to redeem us from death in our sleep. Jacob transfers this angel to his grandchildren, to protect the future, and we all follow his example. He has taught us to protect our children.

As our patriarch, Jacob is the one who ushers our identity into that of "Israel." As an individual, Jacob gives us the treasured gift of the angels. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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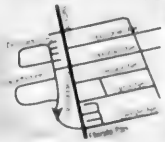

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Lunch in the south of France

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

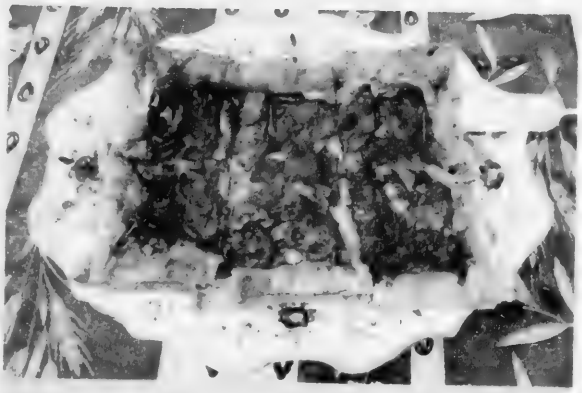
This year, my No. 1 travel dream came true. My husband and I toured the French Riviera and Provence, where there's a deep azure sea that borders cities with tree-lined boulevards, elaborate fountains and a multitude of restaurants and cafés. The landscape boasts sun-kissed Provençal lavender fields, olive trees and acre upon acre of lovingly tended ancient vineyards. The south of France is a mouth-watering, living portrait.

Nice, on the French Riviera, is too delicious to describe, with its amazing art, much of it displayed in the public squares, the seaside promenade and its famous Vieille Ville (Old Town). At mealtimes, we had ample opportunity to sample authentic Niçoise salads and local wines while enjoying wonderful views from sidewalk cafés.

Travelling through the back roads of Provence, we followed the weekly market day into almost every town and village. Market day boasts local farmers with fresh produce and eggs, butchers, fishmongers, bakers displaying artistic breads and delightful pastries, makers of cheese and other milk products and chocolatiers displaying sinfully good Provencal sweets. These vendors set up their booths outdoors each day in a different village. They were joined by artisans selling jewelry, clothing, pottery, linens and artwork. Many market days also included hardware and tools, personal care items and toys.

One of the highlights was a tour of a multi-generational family-owned and run Provençal vineyard and winery where we were given a private tour. We learned that the old vines could only be tended and harvested by hand. The original design of the old grapevines and the layout of the vineyards were not suited to machines and therefore would be damaged if machines were used. The opposite was true for the winery. Many modern machines worked alongside some more traditional wine making methods.

After our tour we, were treated to an alfresco lunch with the owners and their family. The dining table was set up outside, in front of their old farmhouse, a cherished home built in 1752 and passed down from generation to generation. The table was placed under a beautiful old tree planted by their winemaking ancestors about 100 years before the house was built. At lunch, we feasted on simple farm fresh fare while enjoying the company of our very welcoming hosts.



Provencal Tomato Tart

You will never believe that something so simple to prepare can taste so amazing!

- ❑ 1 box frozen puff pastry, defrosted (500g)
- ❑ 1/2 cup Parmesan Romano cheese, grated
- ❑ 3-4 large ripe tomatoes
- ❑ extra virgin olive oil
- ❑ pepper
- ❑ parchment paper

Preheat oven to 400. Place a sheet of parchment paper on two cookie sheets. Unroll one puff pastry over the parchment on the first cookie sheet and the second on the other. Sprinkle 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese evenly over each puff pastry. Cut out the stems of the tomatoes, slice them into 1/4-inch slices and spread them evenly over the puff pastry, leaving a margin around the outside. Drizzle the tomatoes with olive oil and sprinkle with pepper to taste. Bake for 25 minutes or until crust is cooked in the middle and the edges are golden brown.

Rustic Plum Tart

- ❑ 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 2/3 cup cold unsalted butter
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 1 tsp. pure vanilla
- ❑ 4 to 6 tbsp. cold water
- ❑ 11/2 lb. small plums, halved and pitted
- ❑ 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup red currant jelly
- ❑ 1 tbsp. Grand Marnier

Combine flour and salt in food processor or bowl, then pulse or add in butter, pure vanilla and one tablespoon sugar until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add water, just until flour is moistened and forms a ball. Divide dough in half, shape each half into a disc. Flatten slightly. Wrap each disc in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Roll each ball of dough into a 12-in. circle on a lightly floured surface. Place dough into a 9-in. pie pan, pressing firmly against bottom and sides. Fold the sides of the dough back into the plate pressing and pinching it together to make a nice edge. Place the plums, cut-side down on top of the dough. Sprinkle the remaining sugar over the plums, then dot plums with butter.

Bake for 1 hour, or until the filling is bubbly and the crust is golden. Meanwhile, whisk together the red currant jelly and Grand Marnier. Brush the mixture over the entire tart just after it comes out of the oven. Cool the tart before serving. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 27, 2014

Philip Reichmann: my uncle Paul taught others the value of tzedakah

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Philip Reichmann, of the prominent and devoutly Orthodox Reichmann family, is the nephew of the late real estate magnate and philanthropist Paul Reichmann. To mark Paul's first yahrzeit last month, the family is holding a tribute dinner on Dec. 15 at the Terrace Banquet Centre, in Vaughan. *The CJN* spoke to Philip about what his uncle is best remembered for, the causes he cared about and the lessons he's given the community.

What is the purpose of the Dec. 15 dinner?

We're doing this dinner as a tribute to Paul's life. More importantly, it's a tribute to his contributions to klal Yisrael – to the people of Toronto, Israel and the Jewish People more broadly.

In fact, the theme of the dinner is that Paul taught the world to give... We're hoping around 1,000 people attend.

Paul taught people about generosity, tzedakah, about giving to others in need and supporting organizations that help fellow mankind and fellow Jews. That was his whole raison d'etre.

The dinner is open to anyone who buys a ticket. The host is Yeshivat Yesodei HaTorah, a school started over 50 years ago that today has roughly 500 boys from across the frum community. It's a school Paul was particularly involved in. Ticket proceeds will go to the school.

What sorts of things was Paul best known for?

Paul was known for many different things. He was an incredible businessman, leader and individual. I think what people most remarked about him was his [commitment to] charity, generosity. In the '70s and '80s, [the extent to which he was giving to charity] was incomparable on the planet Earth. Nobody was giving tzedakah as the Reichmann family was in the '80s. Today, there are many others who have followed in his footsteps, lots of extremely generous people who give tens of millions of dollars every year, but the Reichmanns did this when it was still a novel concept, and that's really what we're paying tribute to with this dinner.

What causes were most dear to Paul?

Yeshivas and schools were his priority.

Paul Reichmann

Ever since he was a young man, he was very active in fundraising and giving money to day schools and yeshivas – primarily in Toronto, but also around the world. That was his focus. He also gave millions to hospitals, to Mount Sinai, SickKids, Sunnybrook and hospitals in Israel.

Was it difficult for Paul to balance his commitment to Orthodoxy with his dedication to business?

That's a great question, and in that one question you define his entire life. Paul was the ultimate example of someone who was extremely successful in both worlds – and they're very different worlds. He was able to bridge them beautifully. He could have dinner with princes and prime ministers one evening, and rabbis and [Jewish] community leaders the next.

He was perfectly comfortable, and highly respected, in both worlds simultaneously. He was able to go to shul in the morning and put on tallit and tfillin and then go and have lunch with the prime minister. It was perfectly natural to him.

Did he ever feel pressure to work on Shabbat or the Jewish holidays?

> *He saw himself as a mere custodian of his wealth, as though it was only for his temporary keeping, before he pumped it all back into the community*

Absolutely not. He wouldn't do that for anything.

Would you say Paul was a big risk-taker?

There's no doubt he was a risk-taker. You can't be successful like that if you don't take risks.

I think he also had a lot of faith in his mission, which I think he would say was to be as successful as he could possibly be, and then return it all back to the community.

He saw himself as a mere custodian of his wealth, as though it was only for his temporary keeping, before he pumped it all back into the community, into klal Yisrael. He felt that was the real reason for his success.

Did his grounding in Torah affect his application of business ethics?

I think his talmudic mind was an asset. He had an ability to see things differently from many people, perhaps from most. He had a perspective that was unique, unusual, and that was a strength that he was blessed with.

I think being a true adherent of Torah and Jewish values made him an ethical person. He was very careful, always, to be on the right side of ethics, to present *al kiddush HaShem* – to not offend the name of God by looking bad to anyone.

He tried very hard to put on the perfect presentation of what an Orthodox Jew should be: kind, caring, thoughtful, generous and honest.

Did he have interests the community may not have known about?

Business was his enjoyment. He was a very aggressive businessman and loved what he did. He loved being in the boardroom as much as anywhere else. But, he was also an incredible family man. He was home, I would say, more than most people of his level of success. He was also committed to his community beyond what, at the time, was the norm. Today, there are a lot of generous [business] people who invest time in the community, but in those days, in the '80s, if you were a businessman, you were spending 24/7 on your business.

In addition to being a great businessman, Paul was a talmudic scholar. He was just as comfortable in the boardroom as in the beit midrash.

That's what Paul Reichmann was, a careful blend of those two universes. ■

Hope is not an illusion

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

There is a story about Eli Wiesel that is not as well known as it should be. Wiesel was in a concentration camp where conditions had become completely unbearable. After one particularly brutal forced march and work detail, everyone was in total despair. A few Russians were also in the camp and had obtained rat poison. There was enough for everyone and the Russians were willing to share. Everyone lined up to take the poison and end their pain and suffering.

One man separated himself from the entire group and stood in the opposite corner. In a halting voice, weak from the march, the beatings and the lack of food, he began singing *Ani Manim*, (*I believe*), an affirmation of perfect belief in the coming of the Mashiach despite the long wait. Shaken to the very fibre of their being, the Jews, one by one, Wiesel among them, slowly crossed the floor and joined the singing. Tears flowing down their cheeks, almost too weak to go on, they sang and they chose life.

Wiesel did not say how many of them ultimately survived but each of them that day acquired a dignity that no enemy could ever remove. If they lived, like Wiesel, they lived to bear witness and to establish new lives and families. If they perished, they did so with honour and with dignity intact. They died with hope and that is always ennobling. Only people without hope are lost.

In a much less dramatic way, Sam Levenson, the American humourist of the '50s and '60s, tells a true story with a profound lesson in his autobiography. The family lived in New York City and was desperately poor. His mother often skipped meals so that the children could eat. They were not religious, but every Friday afternoon, before Shabbat, his father would take out a charity box, a pushke, and drop some coins in it, saying that it was "for the poor."

Levenson never thought about the ritual until he was much older. How could his father have put money aside "for the poor" when they were so desperately poor themselves? And then it dawned on him. His father never gave up the dream of one day doing well. And if he did not succeed, then his children would. Levenson's father never considered himself poor because he never gave up hope in the future. His father was not unrealistic or delusional: all the children did well and the dream was realized.

The Wiesel and the Levenson stories are both true. One concerns life and death and the other does not. Yet they have in common a view of life that is positive and enriching in circumstances where others would despair. It is no trouble to utter noble sentiments from an easy chair. It is quite another matter to live through the most painful times and to act with honour and integrity, to find the good and right in the darkest hours, to be challenged in the core of your being and to rise to that challenge in a way that may not soon be rewarded if ever. To do what is right because it is right.

Our world today presents different kinds of challenges. Most are not faced with the dire circumstances of Wiesel or Levenson.

> *They had nothing but hope. We have everything but hope.*

Their world faced the horror of poverty and virulent anti-Semitism that we do not, but they had values and hope that are mostly lacking in our world. They had nothing but hope. We have everything but hope.

Whether it is the situation of Israel's survival, Judaism's future, the threat of worldwide terrorism or personal problems under discussion, there is an air of pessimism and gloom that permeates society today. We need urgently to learn from previous generations that hope is not an illusion. It is as real as the dignity of those who survived the Holocaust and those who did not, as necessary as the dream of Sam Levenson's father, as powerful as our own determination. Hope is the cornerstone on which dreams are built. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Martin Stephen Kazdan ז"ל – 1930-2014

MD., Msc., FRCSC Ophthalmologist, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

Martin died at home surrounded by cherished family. Loving husband to Norma Sherman (deceased). Marty found love again with his wife Manon. Loving father and father-in-law to David and Debby, Jonathan and Ilana, Peter and Allison, Devra and Edward Hertzman and stepchildren Ruth, Natalie and Kenneth Gangbar. Cherished Zaidy to Jordana, Hailey, Abbey, Lindsay, Noah, Sydney, Sammy and stepgrandaughter Brooke. Devoted brother and brother-in-law to Jerome and Pearl, Merle and Derek Richards, Ruth and Maureen Hynes. Martin was devoted to his extended family and many precious friends. Martin was a kind, gentle man, loyal friend, and accomplished doctor. He was well known and respected by his peers and admired by his patients. He had a lifelong love of birds and nature and especially enjoyed the Credit River childhood cottage and Gooderham Family cottage. He graduated in Medicine from University of Toronto, did a residency in Ophthalmology at the Mayo Clinic and received a Master of Science at University of Minnesota. A Fellowship with the renowned New York surgeon Dr. Wendell Hughes followed. Returning to Toronto, Martin joined the Opthalmology practice of his father Dr. Louis Kazdan and they were later join by his brother Dr. Jerome Kazdan. Martin pioneered the use of ocular ultrasound and was a passionate advocate for eye spasm treatment while not retiring until 2012. Martin received recognition of dedicated service of forty years to the University of Toronto, forty nine years to North York General Hospital and fifty years to Mount Sinai Hospital. Sincere thanks to all who attended to Martin, especially Tammy Latner Palliative Care of Mount Sinai Hospital and Remie Costillo. To all who knew Martin, he lives on in the loving memories we hold dear in our hearts. *Donations may be made to Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation of Toronto, 416-586- 8203, www.mshfoundation.ca/tributecards Memo: Dr. Martin Kazdan Special Fund for Ophthalmology, or The Baycrest Foundation, 416- 785-2875*

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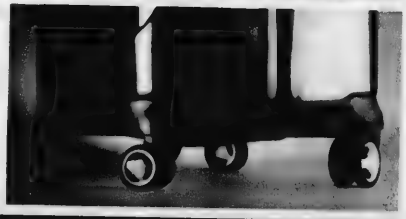

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Air Canada 787 Dreamliner to Tel Aviv offers luxury for less

Wider seats, more leg room, priority check-in, boarding and baggage handling and two free checked bags are only some of the perks available when you book premium economy seats on Air Canada's Boeing 787 Dreamliner from Toronto to Tel Aviv.

Peter Fitzpatrick, Air Canada's manager of media relations, says the seats – also available on some Boeing 777s and in the works for most of its wide-body, long-haul aircraft – are priced between economy and business class, come with a next generation entertainment system with an 11-inch screen and hundreds of hours of top-rated entertainment on demand, premium meals including complimentary wine and spirits, hot towel service, pillow and blanket, amenity kit, and better frequent flyer mileage and Aeroplan Miles accumulation than economy.

Air Canada inaugurated non-stop service from Toronto to Tel Aviv in 1995, Fitzpatrick says. "We are proud to be the only Canadian carrier to operate between Canada and Israel, and the only carrier to operate daily flights during the peak summer season.

"With the launch of our new Boeing 787 Dreamliner service between Toronto and Tel Aviv, we are further consolidating our leading position in the Canada-Israel market."

The 787, he says, is the most technically advanced and comfortable airliner flying in the world today. "That we are dedicating it to this route represents a significant commitment on our part to the future of our service to Tel Aviv."

Fitzpatrick says that "customers will greatly enjoy flying aboard our Dreamliner. It showcases our newest interior with three levels of cabin service, including the next generation of our industry-leading, lie-flat seats in our international business class.

"The 787 offers all customers a superior travel experience, with vaulted ceilings, state-of-the-art mood lighting, and windows that are 30 per cent larger than normal aircraft windows. It also provides customers with a more comfortable cabin atmosphere to reduce jet lag."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The new premium economy seats on Air Canada 787 Dreamliner AIR CANADA PHOTOS

More than this, says Fitzpatrick, "the operating efficiencies of the 787 are such that they will make the Toronto-Tel Aviv route financially stronger. With the right aircraft now operating the route, we are expanding our service to Tel Aviv. This year, we are increasing capacity with the larger 251-seat Dreamliner and by adding frequencies, going from three weekly return flights to up to five weekly flights this winter."

He says that Tel Aviv plays an important role in Air Canada's international network. "As a destination, Israel draws travellers from across North America and the world, and this helps drive our international strategy to expand by connecting global travellers through our Toronto hub.

"And it works the other way, too. Our flights are conveniently timed so travellers originating from Israel can easily connect on to other destinations in our network, particularly in Western Canada and throughout the United States."

The 787 is the newest aircraft in Air Canada's fleet, says Fitzpatrick, and the most modern passenger airliner currently in the skies. "Its revolutionary design provides unsurpassed comfort. We currently have four of these aircraft in our fleet, so it says something about the importance we attach to [flying to] Tel Aviv." ■

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Sedona: Red rocks and Jewish lullabies

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I'd come to Sedona, with a population of 10,000, to check out the red rocks for which it is famous, and couldn't resist stopping into shul for services. The synagogue was bustling with locals and visitors as Rabbi Alicia Magen's melodic voice wafted through the sanctuary, serenading us with Sabbath lullabies as she strummed her guitar. After services my husband and I joined the congregation in a kiddush, noshing on enchiladas and cheesecake as we chatted with locals. Most were retirees from afar who had settled in Sedona, lured by its combination of rugged good looks and the many amenities and festivals, created to cater to the two million visitors who come each year.

A highlight of the trip was when I headed out on horseback for a better view of the monolithic red stones that have made Sedona a tourism magnet, and they truly are magnificent. As you head towards Sedona on Highway 179, you round a corner and there they are: striking, massive, dignified and unmistakably fiery red.

Later, on a bumpy pink jeep tour that takes us closer to the red rocks, I learn that these are not mountains but sand dunes that rise up to 6,592 feet into the sky. The rocks get their blazing hue from hematite, a reddish form of iron oxide deposited as water seeped through layers of ancient sandstone, millions of years ago. Time has carved spirals, hills and camelback shapes into the sandstone, structures that extend their arms into the sky and create a vivid backdrop that can't help but startle and amaze you.

With our jeep bumping over rocky terrain in the Coconino National Forest, just minutes from Sedona's retail strip, our guide pointed out agave plants, prickly pear cactus and Arizona cypress trees. Though it may look dry and arid, Red Rock country is biologically rich, with a range of different plant communities that support a huge variety of wildlife, from javelin herds to fox and coyote, bears, badgers and roadrunners. For archaeologists, the ground below us is a living museum littered with fragments from the past, including pottery shards from the Sinagua people who resided in the area until 1400 AD.

Later, back in Sedona's uptown cluster of stores I sampled the fruit of the desert: syrupy sweet prickly pear ice cream and a plate of hot cactus fries, before ambling around the strip. Its stores are a touristy mix of art and pottery galleries and 'made-in-China' souvenirs, interspersed with resort timeshare salespeople inside so-called 'tourist info' offices. So I cut short the window shopping and instead, hit the road for Flagstaff to try an adventure treetop experience called Flagstaff Extreme.

I admit, I was scared when I strapped on a harness and climbed ladders into the upper reaches of Ponderosa pine trees. I nearly talked myself out of the experience, and it was only my husband's coaxing assurances that the obstacles looked scarier than they were, that kept me moving. But after a few minutes of navigating through the forest's pines using swings, ziplines and bridges, my confidence soared. The wind was blowing through the treetops as I found courage I never knew I had. After completing each of the five levels of adventure, an exhilarating wave of achievement washed over me, propelling me forward.

The Sedona synagogue and a view of the magnificent red rocks. LAUREN KRAMER PHOTO

On my final day in Arizona we joined Mary McDowall for an ATV tour a half-hour from Sedona in Prescott National Forest. The owner of Arizona Offroad Tours, she took us 25 miles into the hilly Verde Valley, pointing out desert willows, manzanita, hollies and other desert shrubs along the way.

Clambering on the spanking new ATVs we powered up a dirt road, then took a sharp turn from it and zoomed noisily along a meandering, dry creek bed created by the swirling waters of flash floods during monsoon season. It was a striking contrast to the boutiques and gift shops we'd been browsing a day earlier in Sedona, McDowall agreed. "You go to Sedona, you're going to see Ferraris," she said with a shrug. "It's touristy. But if you're an outdoor person, this is the place for you, because there's nature everywhere." ■

If You Go:

- For jeep tours contact PinkJeepTours.com or call (800) 873-3662
- Horsin' Around Sedona offers 90-minute trail experiences starting at $98. Info: horsinaroundsedona.com; (800) 403-1690
- Arizona Offroad Tours offers guided tours in Prescott National Forest starting at $46. Myarizonaoffroadtour.com or call (928) 451-1777
- Flagstaff Extreme courses start at $49 for adults and $25 for kids. Info: flagstaffextreme.com or call (888) 259-0125
- Stay: The writer was a guest at Sedona Rouge Hotel & Spa; www.sedonarouge.com (866) 312-4111
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Kosher dream vacations from **Kosherica**

Kosherica, the glatt kosher travel and leisure giant, is thrilled about its upcoming winter and Passover lineup, says company representative, Helit Edelstein

[We are most excited about our trip] to the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas. Guests will experience a vacation that in the past they could only dream about," she says.

Kosherica is famous for its extraordinary attention to detail, exceptional fresh glatt kosher cuisine and world-class entertainment, she says.

Edelstein says that this coming winter and Passover, Kosherica will provide guests with the most sought-after luxury resorts and cruise lines in the world.

"This family-owned business offers everything from meaningful Shabbat services, inspiring lectures with scholars in residence, daf yomi classes and minyanim, to top-notch live concerts with Jewish headliners."

Kosherica's winter lineup will begin on Jan. 18 at the AAA rated Four Diamond Atlantis Resort and Spa in Paradise Island, Bahamas. "This perfect getaway for families will offer world-class glatt kosher cuisine, amazing casinos, golf, breathtaking water parks, state of the art spas, and unparalleled customer service. Book Kosherica at The Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas and get 15 per cent off until Dec. 5."

In addition to the Atlantis Resort, Kosherica will also host an exceptional Chanukah cruise to the western Caribbean (Dec. 21-28), and an All-Star Jewish Music Festival Cruise to the Eastern Caribbean (Jan.18-25) aboard Royal Caribbeans' Allure Of The Seas. The music festival will feature Avraham Fried, Manis Friedman, Yaakov Motzen, and Boaz Davidoff.

Allure of the Sea, photo supplied by Kosherica

> *This perfect getaway for families will offer world-class glatt kosher cuisine*

"Kosherica's 2015 Luxurious Passover Collection gets underway this spring with our star, The Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas. "Passover will never be the same once you experience the number one resort in the world for families. This program is sure to sell out, so customers should book early to avoid disappointment," says Edelstein.

"The collection will also feature the legendary Eden Roc Hotel in Miami Beach, another AAA rated Four Diamond Award Hotel. Overlooking Miami Beach, the stunningly glamorous new Eden Roc embraces its role as a classic of American luxury, yet welcomes guests with a gracious new contemporary spirit.

"Once again, guests can luxuriate in spacious rooms and suites. Sun-worshippers can relax poolside at one of four heated, infinity-edged pools or claim a chaise lounge on the beach," she says.

For the ski buffs or those who like to sit by a roaring fire and watch others ski, there's the Four Seasons in Whistler, B.C. "It is inarguably the No. 1 overall ski resort in the world, with steep, Olympic-calibre slopes and lifts that are unequalled anywhere. The hotel is known for royal service and luxurious comfort."

Finally, for golf aficionados, Kosherica offers the highly sought-after PGA Resort and Spa in Palm Beach, which has sold out early for four years in a row and has only a limited space available, she says. ■

Call Kosherica, 305-695-2700 or 877-724-5567 or www.Kosherica.com

Me, myself and **Malta**

IRENA KARSHENBAUM
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some things are hard to explain. Like why we are drawn to certain people or places. My theory is we're drawn to certain people because we have a long history with them, even if we just met them. We're drawn to certain places because we walked through that land earlier, or in a past life or our ancestors did, and the memory of the experience has been seared into our soul or DNA.

This is why I was drawn to Malta.

Initially, I was scared to travel alone but overcame my fear by envisioning myself sipping a cappuccino at a cafe on a cobblestone street while writing "The Great Novel of Our Time."

At the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, where I transferred, I met Peter, a former Torontonian who coincidentally lives in Sliema, blocks from the Imperial Hotel where I was staying, and who helped me find my way around as I made no travel plans. "We're Canadian," he explains.

Sliema, Malta's largest town, is the main centre for shopping and restaurants. At one restaurant I write in my Moleskine, "I ate beef olives called *bragioli* only there were no olives." I read back what I wrote. Needs work.

At the Imperial, I imagine myself all so like *Lost in Translation*. I plonk down in a mid-century armchair determined to perfect my brilliant writing.

I must have looked so Scarlett Johansson, or antiquated, as a man sitting across from me looks up from his 21st century communication contraption and asks about my diary. Thomas from Slovenia confides that he worries about loneliness and alienation.

The main island of Malta is 316 square kilometers and peppered with small cities. The streets are cobblestone. With a population of 450,000, you see the same people all over and say hello. Peter shows me his "typical Maltese townhouse" with high ceilings, a large modern galley kitchen and a back patio that manages to fit a pool.

I walk along the shore of the Marsaxlokk fishing village and sail the caves of the Blue Grotto. I visit Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples built around 3600 BCE, considered some of the oldest places on earth.

Top, a view of the fishing village of Marsaxlokk. Above, the sanctuary of the synagogue serving Malta's tiny Jewish community in Ta'Xbiex. IRENA KARSHENBAUM PHOTOS

In the capital city of Valletta, I visit Our Lady of Victory Church where I meet an attendant who tells me that 30 per cent of Maltese have Jewish surnames, himself included. I call hoping to find an ancient Jewish community tracing its lineage to the Alhambra Decree (Edict of Expulsion).

An elderly man tells me there are about 80 Jews living in Malta, mostly Sephardi. His family came from Morocco in the 1930s. There is an ancient Jewish cemetery in Rabat where they buried in the rocks "but we don't have the keys." Is there a JCC where I can hang out? He explains there is a synagogue in a private flat. He wishes me a good trip and hangs up.

I feel bruised. Thomas from Slovenia and I drink wine together in the lounge and talk late into the night. He tells me that he only learned his daughter was not his biological daughter after she was born. I tell him of a dying man who possessed my heart with a single whisper of my name. "You can't explain love," he says.

Sicily is two hours away by ferry. Snippets of memory dance in my head of my family's journey on a HIAS bus. It's 1978. The bus is full of Soviet refugees and is racing towards Rome. There is no toilet on the bus. I'm eight. My father throws plastic bags of my pee out the bus window. The tour guide tells us the bus does not have a toilet and there will be no bathroom stops until Taormina, two hours away. Taormina is worth every bladder sacrifice and dazzles majestically perched on a hillside over the Mediterranean. I feel I've come home.

Back in Malta, I visit Comino, one of the three islands that make up the archipelago. Comino is where the prophetic Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia wrote the *Sefer ha-Ot*. Thousands of tourists come daily to claim a piece of this sand and hang on rocks all for the pleasure of dipping into chilled azure waters.

I travel to Rabat in search of Jewish catacombs where I bump into a site officer who tells me the catacombs date back from 4 to 9 CE. The Jewish and Christian catacombs are similar he says, "because there wasn't much difference between the two religions back then."

Bugibba is the seat of the newly arrived Chabad. The trip takes me to the synagogue in the private flat in Ta'Xbiex where I meet Reuben Ohayon, the head of the Jewish community. After our visit, he walks me to the bus stop where he pulls out a book, in Hebrew. He explains it was written by Adam after he was expelled from Gan Eden. "I felt compelled to give it to you," he says. It's his last copy. The inside cover reads, The Abulafia Jewish Foundation of Malta.

I know one thing, God is the perfect author and he writes our (long) lives according to the best travel plans. ■

Irena Karshenbaum writes in Calgary.
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BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

As our taxi wound through downtown Montreal, the driver pointed out the landmarks – the Bell Centre, Place Ville Marie, the Stock Exchange Tower...

He was so keen on showing us the city, I didn't have the heart to tell him I'm a former Montrealer and pretty familiar with the sites.

We drove along the narrow streets of Old Montreal and when we reached the harbour, I could see our cruise ship in the distance.

My husband and I were about to embark on a seven-day cruise that started in Montreal and ended in Boston. Who knew major cruise lines operate out of Montreal? They certainly weren't around when I was growing up.

We were booked with Holland America, but Crystal, Oceania, Seabourn and Silversea also run cruises from Montreal. The itinerary included stops in Quebec City, Charlottetown, Halifax and Bar Harbor, Maine.

At breakfast the first morning, we could see the iconic Fairmount Chateau Frontenac Hotel, Quebec City's most recognizable building, looming above a cliff overlooking the St. Lawrence River. We docked right at the foot of Old Quebec.

The 400-year-old walled city is incredibly picturesque and vibrant, with its winding cobblestone streets and 17th- and 18th-century stone buildings.

We made our way along walkways lined with boutiques, galleries, restaurants and cafes in la Basse-Ville or Lower City, the oldest section of Quebec.

Instead of trudging all the way uphill, we rode the Funicular, a cable car/ elevator that connects the lower city to Dufferin Terrace in la Haute-Ville or Upper City.

After admiring the panoramic view of the St Lawrence, we walked along the terrace to La Promenade des Gouverneurs. This steep multi-level walkway leads to the Plains of Abraham, the site where France lost Quebec to England in the historic battle of 1759.

We didn't realize we'd be climbing more than 300 stairs, but hey, when you're on a cruise and food is available 24 hours day, a little extra exercise is not a bad thing.

On the walk down we passed the citadel, the Chateau Frontenac and numerous 17th- and 18th-century squares and monuments. We even had enough time to take in an outdoor accordion concert at Place Royale, the main square in the Lower City.

The next day there were no stops. Our ship continued northeastward along the river, which widened considerably as it flowed into the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. We actually saw some dolphins jumping against the current.

We reached Charlottetown on the third morning. After our day at sea, I was eager to get some exercise, so we rented bikes for the morning. We cycled on the Confederation Trail, a 410-kilometre network of recreational trails spanning PEI.

In the afternoon we visited Province House, the venue of the historic meeting of 1864, when the Fathers of Confederation decided to make Canada an independent country. The building is in Charlottetown's heritage district, an area dotted with art galleries, antique shops, cafes, and century-old townhouses.

Later we walked to Government House, an elegant Georgian home overlooking the beach at Victoria Park. This historic house is the official residence of PEI's lieutenant governor.

We spent our fourth day in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Some passengers booked excursions to Fortress Louisbourg, but we stayed in town. Our visits to two historic 18th-century homes – Cossit House Museum (75 Charlotte St.), and Jost House Museum (54 Charlotte St.), were very enjoyable, but most of the day was uneventful.

When my husband and I disembarked in Halifax the next morning, our first stop was Pier 21, Canada's immigration museum. From 1928 until its closure in 1971, Pier 21 was a processing centre for new immigrants landing in Canada by boat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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Keeping kosher in **Costa Rica**

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of the holiday homes available through Kosher Casas, photo supplied by Kosher Casas

Kosher Jews can now travel the world without bringing their own pots and pans, thanks to the newly launched Kosher Casas, which offers travellers luxurious villas in Costa Rica, equipped with a kosher kitchen and a private pool.

Founded by Bryna Shuchat Landes and Eve Berman, Kosher Casas aims to give observant Jewish travellers the chance to experience exotic destinations without worrying about finding kosher food, or packing pots and pans to make their own food. The two experienced travellers and business professionals came up with the idea after experiencing first hand the difficulties of keeping kosher while travelling.

"I travel a lot with my family, and it's always been a difficulty, especially with kids, trying to go to interesting places and keeping everybody happy as far as food choices are concerned," said Landes.

"It's very limiting when you keep kosher – [we had to travel to places] where there are kosher restaurants or supermarkets with kosher products. We wanted to expand our horizons a bit, so we went to Costa Rica, arranged for a home with a chef, kosher meat and pots and pans, and it was a life-altering experience. When I came home everyone asked me how did we did it, and I realized I should really do this for people."

Since launching in August, they've seen a tremendous response from observant families who have always wanted to visit exotic destinations, as well as others looking to host destination weddings and bar mitzvahs.

Kosher Casas offers more than 90 homes available to rent to suit a variety of needs, from one-family villas to others that can fit up to 50 people, as well as condos, located in three different parts of Costa Rica.

The homes all have a private kitchen completely kashered prior to arrival under the supervision of the chief rabbi of Costa Rica, and families can choose from an extensive menu of prepared and unprepared kosher foods, delivered to the villas prior to arrival. There is also maid service, concierge service to help plan activities and excursions, and a private pool (or a shared pool for the condominiums.) The villas can accommodate Chalav Israel needs, as well as be kosher for Passover.

"Costa Rica has so many wonderful things to do. It's an exotic destination that people who keep kosher don't normally get to [visit,]" said Landes.

Prices vary, but start at around $3,000 for a private villa for one week, which covers the cost of the kashering, delivery of kosher food, maid and concierge service (but not the cost of the food itself.)

For travellers wishing to spend Shabbat near a synagogue, Kosher Casas can arrange for them to stay in a hotel in San Jose, where the country's only synagogue is located, and then deliver them to their villa for the rest of the trip. Alternatively, groups of 10 or more can arrange to have a Torah sent to their villa under certain circumstances.

"We have been to every one of these homes. We didn't want to have a house on our website that we hadn't visited so we really offer personal service," said Landes.

"When people call us, they want advice. They explain their [circumstances] and want us to make recommendations for them. It gives them comfort because they haven't been and we know what it's like. We've been there and we can make suggestions."

They hope to expand to more destinations in the coming year, to offer kosher Jewish travellers the chance to travel the world without a suitcase of pots, pans, and cans of tuna.

"We'd love to have Kosher Casas located in numerous countries so people can have a whole option of destinations and be able to eat well," said Landes. ■

For more information, visit www.kosher-casas.com or call 1-866-613-3618.

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Halifax Harbour, a historic home in Sydney, N.S. and Bar Harbor, Maine at low tide.
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTOS

Tour is relaxing and educational

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

The facility reopened as a museum in 2002 and has some excellent displays showing the diverse history of Canadian immigrants.

Pier 21 staff also help visitors access archival information. I was excited to find records of my grandmother's entry into Canada in 1907 and her marriage to my grandfather in 1916.

The Halifax waterfront is a bustling place with visitors and locals mulling about the boat-lined wharf.

We spent a couple of hours at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, where we saw an excellent documentary on the Halifax explosion that killed 2,000 people in 1917.

There is also an exhibit on the 1912 Titanic disaster. We learned that a recovery crew from Halifax retrieved the bodies of some of the doomed ship's victims, including 10 Jewish passengers. They were buried in the local Jewish cemetery.

Bar Harbor was our stop on Day 6. This quaint tourist town on Mount Desert Island is just off the coast of Maine.

We took a self-guided tour to get a sense of the town's history. During the Gilded Age, Bar Harbor had been the summer playground of the monied class and many of the sprawling summer homes of that era are now seaside inns and hotels.

That evening we attended a Kabalat Shabbat service with a dozen other Jewish passengers. A ship steward had set up a room with prayer books, electric Shabbat candles, challah, gefilte fish and a selection of kosher wines.

There were few opportunities to get free alcohol on the ship, so we did some schmoozing and a little boozing after the service. It was a fitting end to a very enjoyable week of cruising. We arrived in Boston early the next morning. ■

Brewing up history

MICHAEL STAVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

From the moment I arrived in Milwaukee I could sense it. If you've never toured a brewery, you wouldn't recognize it.

"It" is that subtle, sweet scent of boiling malt. For beer aficionados, the aroma teases the senses, enticing them to slowly sip a cold one on a hot summer afternoon.

Though originally settled by a French-Canadian, Milwaukee grew quickly during the 19th century due to the large influx of German immigrants. With their arrival began a long beer brewing history that can still be found on nearly every street corner.

Fueling Milwaukee's economy for more than a century, the beer industry is woven into the fabric of city life. From the stately Pabst mansion, to the upstart, kosher-certified Lakefront Brewery, Milwaukee relishes its connection to beer. Even the classic TV show Laverne & Shirley, set in Milwaukee, had its protagonists work in the fictitious Shotz brewery. Perfectly complimenting Wisconsin's legendary sausage and cheese production, Milwaukee's brewing tradition ensures a delightful culinary visit.

But this city founded along the shore of Lake Michigan has much to offer even the most ardent teetotaller.

The Harley Davidson Company, perhaps the world's most iconic motorcycle brand, began in Milwaukee in 1901. Founded with the goal of creating a motorized bicycle to rival early automobiles, Harley Davidson grew steadily into one of the world's largest motorcycle manufacturers. The company maintains an impressive display of its vehicles at the city's Harley Davidson Museum.

Scenically located along the shores of Lake Michigan, the Milwaukee Art Museum houses an impressive collection of pieces from around the globe. The Herzfeld Foundation, started by local Jewish philanthropists, Richard and Ethel Herzfeld, sponsored the critically acclaimed *Postcards from America* photographic exhibit upon its debut in Milwaukee. The remarkable travelling exhibition showcases talent from amateur local photographers in each city visited.

The statue of Happy Days character "Fonzie" along
Museum. MICHAEL STAVSKY PHOTOS

Milwaukee recently revived its downtown core with its trendy Riverwalk pedestrian walkway nestled alongside the Milwaukee River. This former industrial neighbourhood includes more than five kilometres of scenic pathways lined with chic boutiques, pubs and restaurants. It was while walking along this pathway that I stumbled upon the Bronze Fonz.

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in Milwaukee

Milwaukee's Riverwalk pedestrian thoroughfare, the city skyline and the Harley Davidson

This full-size statue of Happy Days character, Fonzie, was unveiled by the city in 2008 in a ceremony that included actor Henry Winkler.

The city is well known for its collection of historic ethnic neighbourhoods. The population of 600,000 includes large German and Irish communities, both of which left their impression on the local landscape.

Nineteenth-century Irish immigrants originally settled in the historic Third Ward District. This area of downtown Milwaukee, encompassing some 16 square blocks, was once known as "The Bloody Ward" due to its rampant crime and mob activities. After suffering catastrophic fires and subsequent ethnic migrations, the district has since morphed into a revitalized, gentrified area for the city's arts community. The Milwaukee Public Market, a shopping venue focusing on locally produced foods, sits at its centre.

Milwaukee's German community, arguably the city's largest and most influential, was augmented substantially by the large influx of German Jews who settled in the 1850s. While most German immigrants went to work establishing the beer, sausage and cheese industries, German Jews went into business and commerce. Max Kohl, founder of the Kohl's Department Store chain, and Bud Selig, former commissioner of Major League Baseball are but two famous Milwaukee Jewish businessmen.

Fleeing pogroms and persecution during the latter half of the 19th century, Milwaukee's Jewish community grew quickly with the arrival of Eastern European Jews. As was the case in many cities, these new immigrants recoiled at the religious decline of their German counterparts. They quickly established their own synagogues and community institutions in the city's north side. Congregation Beth Jehudah, founded by chassidic leader Rabbi Jacob Twerski in 1927, remains the sole remnant of this once flourishing Jewish area. Milwaukee's most famous Jewish resident, late Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, was a member of this enclave. Though no local institution exists in her honour, the Milwaukee Jewish Museum has an extensive exhibit dedicated to her illustrious life. ■

Michael Stavsky acknowledges the assistance of the Greater Milwaukee Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and Travel Wisconsin in arranging his family's trip to Milwaukee.

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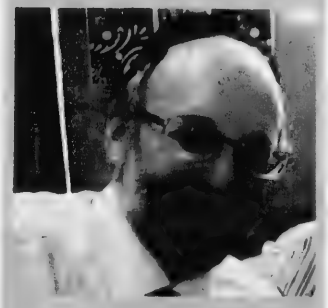
After Ferguson
Is there a Jewish obligation to fight for the rights of marginalized groups?
PAGE 16



Help pours in
Howie Rothman remains in hospital, while Jews worldwide support his family.
PAGE 12

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A Jewish response to physician-assisted death

As a national debate heats up, how does religion fit in? **PAGE 8**

SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

Concordia BDS vote in limbo

Ballots remain uncounted as electoral officer calls in outside party to referee disputes. **PAGE 24**

Remembering Sephardi refugees

Ottawa event recalls Jews who fled Arab lands after Israel's creation in 1948. **PAGE 30**

Wrestling with Jewish identity

Documentary examines role of music in artists' links to Judaism. **PAGE 51**

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Campus anti-Semitism – there's an app for that, and Jewish groups part ways

Reporting anti-Semitism made easy

The Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) and the Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi have released a free smartphone app designed to help Jewish students and supporters of Israel deal with hate, bias, anti-Semitism and extreme anti-Israel harassment on campus. CombatHateU is available from Google Play and iTunes and lets students confidentially report hate crime or anti-Israel incidents to the SWC. It's modelled after a similar app for high school students.

Soccer team owner charged

Dave Whelan, owner of the soccer club Wigan Athletic FC, has been charged by England's Football Association for derogatory remarks about Jews and Chinese people. Whelan, 77, has apologized for comments to the *Guardian* newspaper that "Jewish people chase money more than everybody else," though he claims he was misquoted. He was defending his decision to make Malky Mackay the team's manager despite an FA inquiry into him for alleged racism in recent email and text exchanges, including one where he referred to Jewish soccer agent Phil Smith, saying, "Nothing like a Jew that sees money slipping through his fingers." Whelan has until Dec. 5 to respond to the FA charge.

Wigan's Dave Whelan apologized, but claims he was misquoted by the *Guardian*.

Birthright dumps New Israel Fund

Birthright Israel, which brings young Jews on free tours to Israel, reportedly cut ties with the New Israel Fund last week, which resulted in the cancellation of a December trip planned by the two groups. One reason for the Birthright decision, NIF told trip participants via email, was because Birthright no longer wanted to partner with groups that seek to influence Israeli policy. The NIF said other reasons included that it violated Birthright rules by making its logo slightly larger than the Birthright logo on promotional materials and that Birthright was cancelling some New York UJA trips due to recruitment concerns. The left-wing NIF has been criticized for giving money to Israeli groups with links to the boycott, divestments and sanctions movement, though it says it has cut ties to them. ■

Gematria

$1 million

The value of an anonymous gift to the Bern Museum of Fine Arts to help the Swiss institution house the collection of late German art collector Cornelius Gurlitt, which may contain Nazi-looted art.

8

The number of shoes discovered stolen from an exhibit at the former Majdanek concentration camp earlier this month.

Quotable

I'm only seeking to apply the laws, which already exist in the Talmud.

— Rabbi Shlomo Riskin on agunot and women's religious practice. Full Q&A, p. 62.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Chanukah humour with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Inside today's edition

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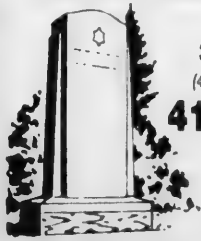

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Letters to the Editor

Caring for each other

I applaud Morris Zbar and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto for the essential work that they do ("We have no choice but to care for each other, Nov. 20). I read with interest about the General Assembly conference of the Jewish Federation of North America and the focus on "the world is our backyard."

However, what came immediately to mind was the piece by Dov Harris, "The dignity Holocaust survivors deserve," (Nov. 6). Surely the plight of these aged fellow Jews who miraculously survived the Holocaust, now living in Ukraine and in dire poverty, deserve our chesed. Surely these Jews in the twilight of their lives should at least be afforded the basic essentials of life. How on earth can they be ignored?

Colin Romain
Thornhill, Ont.

Jewish and democratic

My question for Michael Diamond ("Can Israel be Jewish and democratic," Nov. 27) is: if the organizational structure of Israel is like the democratic countries of the western world, what exactly is "Jewish" about that? Allowing citizens to practise Judaism in its many forms, is that "Jewish?" Or are the underpinnings of the democratic state of Israel that you envision really closer to what might be considered a universal or human code?

Brian Kirsh
Toronto

Some best friend

It is said that Jordan is Israel's best friend in the Arab world. How then can one explain that the Jordanian Parliament, on Nov. 19, opened a cabinet meeting with a moment of silence for the two Palestinian murderers who slaughtered five Israelis in a Jerusalem synagogue the day before. At least we know the Muslims who danced in the streets of Gaza to celebrate the murders admit they are enemies of Israel.

Bert Raphael
President, Jewish Civil Rights Foundation of Canada, Toronto

A brave project proposal

I really appreciate Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz's article ("Rabbis are not God: a lesson from the Freundel scandal," Oct. 30). If only more people in the world were more humbly reflective about their daily human fallibilities and equally self-accountable as Rabbi Steinmetz strives to be.

Yet, every Yom Kippur, we read about Jonah and we also read the parshah (Leviticus 18, 1-30) that deals with sexual appropriateness. Every Yom Kippur, I only hear rabbis discuss Jonah and the whale. And every year, I wonder why rabbis lack the courage to discuss what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour. Why do our rabbis continue to be part of the problem and perpetuate the taboo, not to mention the weight of silence and shame then sadly inherited by all the victims?

Surely if one rabbi in South Africa can champion the Shabbat Project, I am certain that one rabbi can back the Be Brave Project to great results. Imagine if every rabbi talked to his or her congregants about some aspect of Leviticus 18, 1-30 on the Day of Atonement. They could discuss the myth that sexual assault only happens to others, or not to nice Jewish girls, not to our daughters, and certainly not to our wives, or not by or to Jewish men, not to mention the myth that we have no homosexual children and adults who we need to feel welcome among us.

We as a community have to be more responsible about the conversation. How else do we then step into areas of support and prevention with true success?

So I ask: would Rabbi Steinmetz accept my challenge? Will he embrace the Be Brave (Day of Atonement) Project so it's in place by Yom Kippur 2015? Wouldn't that be a honest way to begin the New Year? And would every other rabbi in Montreal if not across Canada who reads *The CJN* be willing to step up to this task?

I'm sure every victim young or old, every perpetrator sitting in silence who is equally shamed from seeking proper help, every affected family trying to find a better way, every Jewish school wanting to give to every Jewish child the deserving trust of all the preventive and/or supporting measures that can be taught in a classroom, every counsellor sworn to secrecy in the field, as well as every Jewish community women's and children's outreach project would also be indebted to your leadership and support.

Marina Mashaal
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjnin-fo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Chanukah: joyous, but complicated

The challenge is to balance intellectual and spiritual sophistication with ritual meaning that's tied to a more innocent and blissful experience

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: In my mind, Chanukah and Purim are the High Holidays for children – the days on the synagogue calendar many of our children most eagerly anticipate. However, the synagogue attendance habits of many Jewish families present a unique challenge: how does one present the joyous side of Judaism when families spend the most time in synagogue on the most serious and sombre days, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur?
How do we share the message of Chanukah with those members of our community whose primary Jewish engagement doesn't include this youthful celebration?

Rabbi Cutler: I know a rabbi who stands at the pulpit on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and tells his congregants, "if you're only going to come to shul three times this year, I don't want to see you here tomorrow." His message is that there are holidays, such as Chanukah and Purim, when family shul attendance may be more appropriate and meaningful than the High Holidays. I think it's important to constantly re-imagine the tone that our services take. If there's a community desire for happier, more uplifting services, then it is our duty as spiritual leaders to modify what we do.

Chanukah is a great holiday to present the complexities of Jewish history. We celebrate the notion of bringing light to the world and boost national pride through the image of the strong Jews, the Maccabees. But Chanukah is much more complicated than that: it commemorates a civil war that pitted those who believed in the integration of outside ideas and knowledge into Jewish beliefs against those who theoretically rejected Hellenism. In that sense, it is a challenging holiday for religious pluralists and progressives.

I want Chanukah to be a holiday of fun and family togetherness. I also want it to be opportunity to engage in serious learning and self-reflection. How do we balance the learning necessary to truly understand a holiday with its more performative aspects?

Rabbi Scheier: I'm mindful of the great teaching of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, who in response to the Jewish community's post-Holocaust declaration of "Never Again" added a crucial element: "Like never before!" In other words, we must celebrate Judaism with a joy that has never been seen.

I recall a childhood Chanukah party – with the requisite ventriloquist and carnival games – at the Monsey Jewish Center in New York. Later in my youth, I attended in-depth lectures that explored the laws of how and where and when to light the Chanukah candles, as well as lectures in Jewish philosophy that contrasted the thinking of Athens with that of Jerusalem.

We can certainly balance the intellectual and spiritual sophistication with the opportunity to experience ritual meaning that is tied to a more innocent and blissful experience. The question remains whether to bring the joy associated with Chanukah to our observance of Rosh Hashanah – both as an authentic reflection of the latter, and as a response to the attendance patterns of our communities – or to make a renewed effort to emphasize the importance of balancing attendance on the Days of Awe with attendance on days of joy.

Rabbi Cutler: As a child, I was drawn to the Chanukah teaching of Hillel. We add one candle per night because we should always be increasing in our holiness. I wondered though about the ninth night. What happens then? In many ways, that is our challenge as rabbis.

As an adult, I am drawn to the teaching of Rabbi David Hartman. If Chanukah is about celebrating the miracle of the oil burning beyond its expected lifespan, Rabbi Hartman argued, then the holiday should only be seven days long. That the oil burned for the first day is, after all, no miracle really. And yet, we celebrate Chanukah for eight days.

The miracle of the first day was the community's willingness to embark on a project with no guarantee they would be able to complete it. When we celebrate Chanukah, we should all be inspired to see engagement in Jewish life as a project whose fulfilment and benefits may not be apparent from the outset. With community and faith, a brighter world may be just a day away. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Fire at Hillel House

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Hillel House at the University of Toronto after a fire in December 1977 destroyed it. The offices were then moved to space in the YMHA building at Bloor and Spadina. Programs were hosted for several years in the Newman Centre at 89 St. George St. In June, Hillel acquired new office space in a house at 604 Spadina Ave.

SeeJN | Cotler talks about anti-Semitism

RAFI YABLONSKY PHOTO

On Nov. 27, some 200 people made their way to Toronto's Scotiabank Theatre for a UJA Federation of Greater Toronto event featuring MP Irwin Cotler, emeritus professor of law at McGill University, former justice minister, and a leading voice in the struggle for human rights. The event, dubbed "Anti-Semitism: The Global Assault on Human Rights," was presented by UJA's accountants and lawyers divisions.

From Yoni's Desk

Chassidic schooling needs a rethink

In April, Quebec Education Minister Yves Bolduc vowed to end government funding for chassidic schools that do not act in accordance with provincial education laws. So-called "illegal" schools, including chassidic schools as well as private institutions affiliated with other religious communities, are accused of neglecting secular studies.

"What is important is that the students have to have a very good education, and they must acquire the knowledge that is necessary," the minister said. "The bottom line is that a Quebec schoolchild must receive the courses prescribed in the law."

Bolduc's announcement came on the heels of accusations levelled by a young married couple who grew up among Montreal's Tash community. The couple, who parted ways with Tash four years ago, lamented the lack of secular education at chassidic schools they attended, and said they wanted their own children to receive the sort of secular schooling they were denied. "Not having a proper education is like having your hands cut off," the wife told reporters.

Last month, the husband, Yohanan Lowen, launched a suit demanding $1.25 million in compensation from two chassidic schools he studied at, the provincial education ministry, the school board and Quebec's director of youth protection. Lowen claims he can barely read and write in English, has no functioning knowledge of French, and lacks basic math and science skills usually taught in grade school. He says his ability to find gainful employment has been severely hampered by his education, or lack thereof. His family, including four children, gets by on welfare and sporadic employment.

"I received zero secular education," Lowen tells reporter Janice Arnold in this week's *CJN*. "Everything except Torah was forbidden" (for more on the story, please see page 23). Religious leaders said it was a sin to study any other subjects, he claims.

Lowen's suit is the first of its kind in North America (a similar case is brewing in New York State), and could have serious ramifications. For years, Quebec governments have threatened to shut down schools that shirk provincial curriculum mandates – to many, it's an issue that goes hand in hand with the ongoing debate over reasonable accommodation. But chassidic leaders counter that much of what is taught in secular education fundamentally goes against their religious beliefs.

Back in 2010, the government of Quebec moved to close Yeshiva Toras Moshe, an unlicensed chassidic school in Outremont, amid claims the boys-only institution employed non-accredited teachers and spent just six hours per week on secular studies. Last month, the sides came to an agreement under which the yeshiva will work with the government to offer basic math and science instruction. In addition, the local school board will help parents administer supplemental secular education at home.

The deal suggests chassidic communities and the government may be able to collaborate creatively. Perhaps Jewish community and religious leaders can also work with both sides to manage costs and logistics, and achieve a higher standard of secular education without sacrificing religious mores. Still, as the case of Yohanan Lowen illustrates, there remains a potentially fundamental problem: how can parents be entrusted to teach their children if they never received secular instruction themselves? ■ — YONI

HISTORY

When rescue is not collaboration

Gaylen Ross

Several years ago I was invited to Budapest to premiere my film *Killing Kasztner*, the story of the controversial Hungarian Jew, Rezso Kasztner, who negotiated with Adolf Eichmann for the lives of 1,684 Jews on a transport to Palestine.

While walking through what was Budapest's Jewish quarter, I came upon the memorial honouring Carl Lutz, the Christian Swiss diplomat, credited also with saving thousands of Jews in Hungary. The statue depicts a Jew lying prone on his back with hand raised heavenward to Lutz, a Michelangelo-like hovering angel of salvation. My immediate thought was where would one put Kasztner? Neither on the ground nor in the heavens – a Jewish rescuer exists in the limbo between.

Holocaust Education Week in Toronto has taken up the theme of collaboration this year, and I applaud its engagement of this highly sensitive subject. Though I have accepted the characterization "Hero or Traitor" to bring shorthand attention to Kasztner, I believe we need different terminology to comprehend the singular task of rescue of Jews by Jews.

The term collaborator (working together, even as equals for a shared goal) is brutal and blunt when applied to the Holocaust and rescue. It is rarely, if ever, attributed to Righteous Gentiles, non-Jews who saved Jews: only their courage, selflessness, and shrewd negotiating skills are extolled. Yet how easily Jews who were involved in rescue have been ascribed ulterior motives, attacked, put on trial, or as in Kasztner's case, murdered. How readily a consummate liar like Eichmann is believed in his uncensored interview in *Life* magazine where he called Kasztner an "equal partner," as if there was equality when one party bargains with a gun to his head. Or Hannah Arendt's deeply misguided indictments of kapos, Jewish Councils and especially Kasztner, plunging them into an even darker post-war grey zone.

Reszo Kasztner in a radio studio in Israel.

For all the wining and bribing that Oscar Schindler did with Nazis, he is not condemned as a collaborator nor does anyone point to the three million Polish Jews who perished in the Shoah and didn't make his list. Yet it was the 450,000 Hungarian Jews who died in Auschwitz that weren't on Kasztner's list that became his legacy.

I have always felt that the reticence of Jews to acknowledge Jewish rescuers (in occupied Europe) was because it became a terrible mirror Jews held up to themselves, reflecting back a shame and guilt at the inability to save one's own. If another Jew saved his family or community, what does that mean when others could not? It was better to believe that all were victims, and only Gentiles could save Jews. The very act of survival was once so tainted in "having done something wrong" it could only multiply a thousand fold if one bargained and negotiated actively for many.

It was especially true in Israel, for the survivors who could not claim the heroism of the Warsaw Ghetto or partisan resistance. When the libel trial turned against Kasztner, those he rescued were also caught in the web of Judge Halevi's unforgiving verdict, "that he sold his soul to the devil." For those survivors the letter "c" of collaboration became the mark of Cain branded on their foreheads.

It is gratifying that we have moved well beyond those times, but still have much work to do in recognizing Jewish rescuers. In the last few years, Yad Vashem (who now credits Kasztner with saving 20,000 Jews in the Strasshof labour camp) and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York have made real strides to do so. The B'nai B'rith organization has established the Jewish Rescuers Citation "to set right the historic record."

> *The term 'collaborator' is brutal and blunt*

To this day, the idea of negotiating, to sit down with our enemies, tests our diplomats. They are fearful that they too will be stigmatized for weakness rather than given credit for their judiciousness and realism – their strength. I defer to Kasztner's own words about rescue: "Our Jewish heroes did not only die on the battlefield of glory. The battle for the rescue of lives also had its martyrs…Our young comrades from Budapest and Bratislava, Chaluzim and Chaluzot, who took care of those hiding in cellars and bunkers, or the Jews imprisoned in the ghettos, or rescued children from the hands of the murderer, showed just as much bravery and heroism, as those, who joined the partisans, and with a weapon in their hands, died a heroes death."

This week marks the 70th anniversary of the Kasztner transport's, 1,361 Jews, released from Bergen-Belsen. They arrived at their refuge in Caux, Switzerland on the second night of Chanukah. ■

Gaylen Ross is director of the award-winning film Killing Kasztner: The Jew Who Dealt with Nazis. *www.killingkasztner.com*

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ROMSPEN

Balancing Judaism and the right to die

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

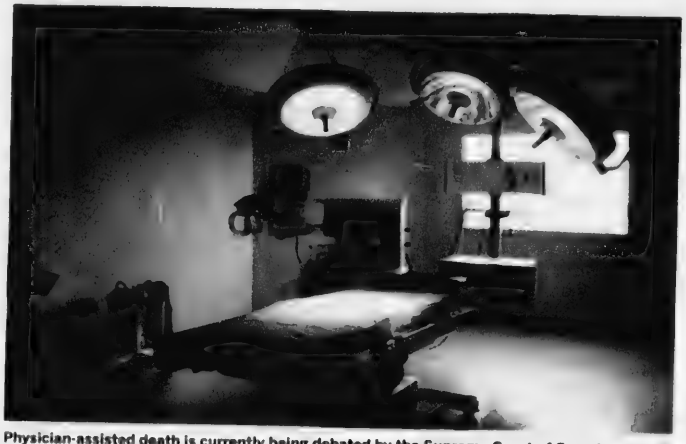
Last spring, Sandy Buchman, a physician with the Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, received an email from his patient on the morning of her death.

The 57-year Jewish woman had made the decision to die with the help of a doctor and gave Buchman permission to tell her story before she left for Switzerland, a jurisdiction where physician-assisted death (PAD) is available to non-residents.

Buchman says his patient chose to hasten her death. "She wanted to control how she died. She didn't want to go too soon, but she didn't want to be too sick to travel."

Before taking the lethal cocktail, she wrote him to express gratitude for the care she received: "'Even though I got excellent palliative care, this [PAD] was something I wanted to do,' she said. 'It should be an option for people in Canada.'"

It's an option slated to be available in Quebec at the end of 2015 – PAD was legalized there in June – and the matter is currently being deliberated by the Supreme Court of Canada, which is considering a legal appeal out of British Columbia about whether PAD should be legal for the terminally ill. As the national debate heats up, it's important to examine the Jewish position on PAD from a religious and medical perspective.



Physician-assisted death is currently being debated by the Supreme Court of Canada.
SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

In a 2014 Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of Dying with Dignity, an organization that advocates for the legalization of PAD, also known as physician-assisted suicide (PAS), 84 per cent of Canadians were in favour of allowing physicians to help competent people die if they are suffering.

While the poll shows broad national support for PAD, it's hard to say the degree to which these findings reflect attitudes in the Jewish community, because only one per cent of the respondents were Jewish.

The results of this poll support what Rabbi Reuben Poupko refers to as the shift in the public's attitude to PAD. The spiritual leader of Montreal's Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, an Orthodox synagogue, says that passage of Bill 52, which legalizes PAD in Quebec, reflects the change in societal values over the last 30 years.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, spiritual leader of Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem, another Orthodox congregation in Montreal, calls the passage of Bill 52 "a social reality." The public is in favour of PAD, he says. "People are resigned to the decision of Quebec society."

Rabbi Poupko warns that this legislation could hasten the deaths of terminally ill people, because they may feel social pressure to opt for PAD.

He says society tends to celebrate the courage of terminally ill people who fight to end their lives. "This creates a societal expectation for others to act in a similar manner."

Rabbi Steinmetz worries that vulnerable people might be bullied into euthanasia by unscrupulous relatives. The legislation may also make it too easy for people with severe disabilities to give up on living when they could have productive lives, like famed scientist Stephen Hawking, he says.

He laments that people are not really aware of the dire consequences of the Quebec legislation. "The choice [Quebec] society has made is a terrible choice."

It's also a choice that's incompatible with traditional Jewish values, according to Rabbi Ronald Weiss, director of the chaplaincy services at Toronto's Jewish Family & Child, who also serves several medical and correctional institutions.

He says the Orthodox position on PAD is very clear. "It's murder to help someone die. It's no different than a physician taking your life… Judaism teaches that every moment of life is precious and of infinite value."

Rabbi Weiss recognizes that painkillers such as morphine can depress breathing and death can occur if the dose is administered improperly. "The intention of the physician is of paramount concern. Deliberately depressing respiration can be likened to smothering."

Rabbi Michael Dolgin, spiritual leader of Temple Sinai, says any discussion of PAD is taboo, according to sacred texts. "From a Jewish perspective, we can't even talk about it, but that finality is an inadequate Jewish response."

The texts predate modern medicine, he says. "There are many situations now where people's existence is extended to a point that we must ask if we are extending life or if we are extending suffering?"

He has been present at end-of-life situations with his congregants. "'We treat our pets better.' I've heard that many times from people. In general they are expressing pain. They are not necessarily looking for an alternative."

Rabbi Dolgin points to jurisdictions such as Vermont and Oregon, where PAD is legal, noting that safeguards exist there to prevent non-consensual euthanasia.

"There is no evidence to support the notion of a slippery slope that will lead to the killing of people to save money or the ending of lives of people with disabilities."

While the majority of cases are dealt with along traditional lines, there are a small number of cases that may warrant a structure for PAD, he says.

"When there is no hope of recovery and extending the pain amounts to suffering, it's a valid Jewish legal and ethical question to ask whether trying to extend that situation as many minutes and seconds as possible is the right Jewish response."

If people are afraid to discuss end-of-life options with their rabbi, they could end up "making tragic choices" without support. "A Jewish response means being open to having a discussion. In the vast majority of cases, people are not looking to hasten death, but they need to talk about it."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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Why we must take Har Nof personally

Gil Troy

The terror attack against the Har Nof synagogue was barbaric. Once again, too many Palestinians have demonstrated their murderous hatred against all Jews. It doesn't matter where Jews are, what they believe, what they are doing, or how old or young they are. That anyone could commit these crimes, that anyone could justify them, that anyone could distribute candies and wave mock axes to celebrate them, is unfathomable – yet this is the enemy Israel faces.

As Israelis struggle with teens killed while hitchhiking, babies being run over, and rabbis being butchered while praying, the coping and mourning mechanisms from previous terror waves have returned.

The geography of terror demonstrates the mental games people play, and the mind games terrorists wish to impose on us. Jerusalem is a safe city in a safe country. Israeli men have the lowest mortality rate in the civilized world. Still, the terrorists' spectacular crimes prey on people. Jerusalemites know where each crime occurred. Many calculate how far those sites are from their normal paths and, being human, how convenient it is to avoid those spots. Others, of course, defiantly maintain their routines. Regardless, the awareness of what happened and where lingers and chills the soul.

The chronology of coincidence emphasizes these events' randomness. We trade stories about the victim who usually prayed earlier, but slept in that day, or the synagogue regular who would have been there, but slept even later. For the non-victim, contemplating coincidences can be soothing, as most of us trust our luck. Alas, I know victims of terror who relive the moment, or the moment before, frozen in the woulda, shoulda, coulda that didn't happen and now tortures them constantly.

Finally, the topography of loss offers us different gates into the devastating narratives of sorrow. The Har Nof slaughter created five widows, 25 orphans and dozens of other grieving relatives, including some elderly parents forced to bury their sons. To process all that pain is overwhelming. Instead, we link to one story, then another. Sometimes, the media emphasizes one particular heartbreak or act of heroism. Often, a personal connection orients our anguish.

For me, the death of Rabbi Moshe Twersky hit extra hard, because he was the son of my professor, Rabbi Isadore Twersky. Prof. Twersky was a legend, both Harvard professor and chassidic rebbe. When I was a graduate student preparing for my oral exams, he supervised me in modern Jewish history, despite his expertise being medieval Jewish thought, especially Maimonides. Nevertheless, because other historians were on leave, he took me on – and broadened my understanding of modern Zionism to include modern religious thought, while modelling the kind of rigorous scholarship and love of learning that made him a great teacher and thinker.

Watching him closely, I admired what I called his "open cloister" approach. He lived his life in a traditional bubble. Yet, intellectually, he was far more open and bolder than most colleagues who dressed more fashionably.

As we studied the clash between traditional Judaism and modernity, I was embarrassed to tell him that my grandfather had been a Talner Chassid who followed his father, the Talner Rebbe. After Prof. Twersky's untimely death, when I eulogized him in these pages, his widow wrote me a lovely letter, which, of course, made me regret my reticence and taught me not to forgo such opportunities. People are people and enjoy making personal connections.

Since Rabbi Moshe Twersky's horrific death, my love and concern for all the families has been channelled through this particular tie. I urge everyone to read about one recent victim, to think about one life, to contemplate one grieving family. Making that personal link helps us take these killings personally – which we must do. All of us who care about Israel and believe in democracy were targeted. And until the entire western world takes these murders more personally and connects to the victims as one way of stirring outrage, the epidemic of terror will continue. ■

Modiano and French wartime memory

Sara Horowitz

When I heard that Patrick Modiano had been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature this fall, I called several friends to share my excitement. "Patrick Who?" "Modi-what?" they replied.

Perhaps I called the wrong friends. But I was struck by the lack of familiarity in North America with the celebrated French writer. Especially among Jewish readers on this side of the Atlantic, the sort-of-Jewish novelist remained surprisingly unknown.

I encountered his first novel about a decade after its publication. Many consider the 1968 *La Place de l'étoile* as one of his best books. But it has yet to be published in English translation. It is at once a descent into the moral ambiguities of wartime and post-war France, and a harsh criticism of those ambiguities. Like much writing by the generation born just after World War II, it is about being born into a world already shaped, already devastatingly marked, by events lived and remembered by the parents' generation.

By now, most people know that Modiano is a French Jewish writer. Or "Jewish-ish." Modiano's father was a Sephardi Jew from Salonika with familial roots in Italy. Like many other Jewish immigrants to France during the interwar period, he was no doubt drawn by the promise of civic equality and economic opportunity. The older Modiano survived the German occupation of Paris by successfully dissociating himself from his Jewish identity, and by collaborating with the very people and institutions that targeted him for genocide.

Engaged in black marketing and wartime profiteering, he developed ties with the French Gestapo and the underworld. He did not wear the yellow star mandated for all French Jews, and on at least one occasion, he reportedly was rescued from deportation by friends in high places. He married Patrick's mother, a Belgian actress, during the war.

Patrick was born soon after the war's end. By all accounts, his childhood was rocky, with protracted absences of both parents, but especially his father. One would not say that he was raised as a Jew, but Jewishness and the Shoah played a strong role in his struggles to define himself.

The many biographical sketches publicized after the Nobel Prize announcement give Modiano's date of birth as 1945. But the jacket of my yellowed copy of *La Place de l'étoile* indicates that he was born in 1947. The disparity puzzled me, so I researched. According to French journalist Denis Cosnard – whose book about Modiano was published in 2011 – and others, Modiano used to make a habit of lying about his birth year. He wanted to attenuate the link with the war's freighted legacy of collaboration and death, and to create distance from his father's experiences.

Yet the war and the genocide held a central place in his writing, beginning with *La Place de l'étoile*. A biting satirical exposé of French collaboration and anti-Semitism, the novel centres on a Jewish collaborationist named Schlemilovitch, whose path brings him to encounter a panoply of French anti-Semitic writers and thinkers. The book probed this shadowy past during a time when France had not yet grappled with the shame of wartime collaboration. Some readers were offended by the character of Schlemilovitch, who seemed to internalize and affirm anti-Semitic rhetoric, while others saw him as part of the satire.

The novel opens with a sober joke, characteristic of Holocaust humour: "In June 1942, a German officer approaches a young man and says to him: 'Excuse me, where is la Place de l'Etoile?' The young man points to the left side of his chest."

The joke rests, of course, on the dual meaning of the phrase la Place de l'Étoile, at once a space in the urban landscape of Paris and – literally – the place of the (yellow) star worn by Jews under racial laws.

I suspect – I hope – that in conferring the prestigious award on this gadfly of wartime memory, the Nobel committee is signalling the ethical necessity to take on the threat of anti-Semitism. ■

Being Ezra Levant

Michael Taube

Canada's conservative movement follows a big tent philosophy. There are many ideological thinkers with disparate views under the political umbrella. We aren't all the same and wouldn't appreciate being viewed in such fashion.

It's probably fair to say that Ezra Levant is one of our movement's most controversial figures. The lawyer, author and pundit spawns equal amounts of love and hatred. His *Sun News Network* show, *The Source*, has a take-no-prisoners mentality that regularly shocks the Canadian establishment (including left-wing Jews). His columns for the *Sun Media* chain are no different.

I've never properly examined Levant's role in Canadian conservatism. I guess there's no better time than the present!

For fun, here's some backstory. Levant and I first met in 1996. He had just written his first book, *Youthquake*, for the Fraser Institute. I was in the early stages of setting up *From the Right*, a nationally distributed conservative commentary newspaper I used to run.

Levant was kind enough to contribute to *From the Right*. I invited him to join my advisory board. I reviewed some of his books for different publications, including *National Review* and the *Weekly Standard*. We've both been *Sun Media* columnists. We've both appeared widely in print, as well as on TV and radio.

Levant and I share some similar traits, from political ideology to background. (He's maintained his Jewish heritage. As I've mentioned in the past, I've been agnostic for more than 30 years.) A reporter once called me the "Ezra Levant of the east." I quickly retorted, "Or maybe he's the Michael Taube of the west." That shut him up fast.

Regardless, Levant and I aren't the same.

Our writing styles are different. Our speaking styles are different. Our personal styles – in terms of our communication with others and to others – are different.

Levant has built a reputation similar to Glenn Beck and Ann Coulter: an intelligent political firebrand with an attacking style who swings for the fences every chance he gets. In contrast, my reputation is (hopefully) seen as being similar to Britt Hume: conservative intellectual who uses a strong voice and a firm hand to make my points clear.

Like other conservatives, I wouldn't be comfortable being Levant. He goes in directions where the presentation, rather than the discussion, is the primary focus. That's not my *raison d'être*.

To be sure, Levant's bombastic, in-your-face personality frustrates many people. His critique of the Roma community, use of a Spanish slur against a Chiquita Brands International executive, and wild tales of Muslim students in Essex County being exempt from Remembrance Day ceremonies drives them up the proverbial wall.

Jonathan Kay, *National Post* columnist and incoming editor-in-chief of *The Walrus*, wrote this in March about his longtime frenemy: "Levant has done a lot of good for the cause of free speech in this country. But sometimes his reckless verbal tactics make it difficult for his supporters to stand by him at all times."

Last month, former Canadian Jewish Congress CEO and current *CJN* columnist, Bernie Farber, noted in Toronto's *Now Magazine*: "All too often Levant cloaks himself in his Jewish heritage as a true defender of Jewish values, in contrast to those he refers to as the 'official Jews,' or Jewish leadership… Levant's antics and intimidation tactics have nothing whatsoever to do with Judaism."

That being said, I believe Levant's detractors often miss the point about his important public role. He tackles topics that are normally avoided. He questions what others usually accept. He criticizes groups and individuals the mainstream media often won't touch. He won't rest until he gets the results he wants.

Like it or not, these are all admirable qualities.

We live in a free society and have the right to oppose Levant's provocative approach and style. Yet it would be a more boring country without him, don't you think? I do. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times columnist, and a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Conference a defining moment for Israel expats

Sara Dobner

Over 750 Israelis living in North America, including several from Toronto, attended the inaugural Israeli-American Council (IAC) Conference in Washington D.C., last month to explore their collective identity, their community's potential, and a vision for their future. The message was loud and clear: We are proud Israelis who care about the Israeli-Jewish identity of the next generation, want to act as a bridge to the American-Jewish community, and continue to support Israel.

The conference received wide coverage in American and Israeli media, some of which painted the IAC as a right-wing organization driven by wealthy philanthropists' agenda. (While it is true that Republican Sheldon Adelson is a major supporter of the IAC, so too is Democrat Haim Saban.) In any case, that was not my experience.

What I witnessed in Washington were apolitical discussions focused on the challenges faced by Israeli expats, the cultural gap with Diaspora Jewish life, split identity, and passing the Israeli-Jewish torch to the next generation. The conference felt like a defining moment in the history of Israeli expats.

The Israeli diaspora has not yet developed a formula that guarantees a sustainable future. Torn between their strong Israeli identity and the need to integrate into the Jewish community, Israelis live in a constant conflict. Unlike other immigrants, many Israelis have difficulty detaching themselves from their motherland. They carry the baggage of a unique culture, a connection to the land, a sense of peoplehood, and a complicated relationship with religion. Perhaps that's why a 2013 IAC poll revealed that 96 per cent of Israelis living in the United States define themselves as Israelis, and 57 per cent of them intend to return to Israel.

There is no one single right answer to address the cultural challenges of the Israeli diaspora. Many of the IAC's activities focus on strengthening the Israeli identity through Israeli-style holiday festivals, Israeli performances, and Israel-related programs. This can help Israelis connect to the familiar while projecting their love and connection with Israel to the surrounding Jewish community. These types of programs can also help support expats who may want to return to Israel.

But the conference also emphasized that Israeli identity can only survive in the Diaspora perhaps two generations. For this reason, it is crucial to strengthen the Jewish identity of Israelis, or develop a temporary hybrid identity to act as a bridge and help their transition to Diaspora life.

In Washington, there was no denial of the ambivalence felt by some speakers about helping Israelis feel comfortable and welcome abroad. Some worry doing so will lead to more Israelis emigrating from Israel. But at the same time, many claim that stronger connections between Israeli expats and Israel could lead to an increase in the chances of expats returning to Israel, or at least supporting it from abroad. To that end, MK Elazar Stern and entrepreneur and investor Yossi Vardi ended the conference by telling Israeli expats: We will always love you, we want the best for you, and we want you back with us, in Israel. Israeli expats, for their part, are voicing similar feelings: Israel is deep in their hearts, they want the best for it and desire to contribute to its success, despite the choice to live abroad.

Israeli expats have to cope with the grief and loss related to emigrating from Israel. For this reason, many of them have not been successful at adapting to Jewish Diaspora life. With the recent emergence of the powerful IAC, it appears that the tide has turned. Once the foundation is laid and momentum is built up, the community may get a life of its own. ■

Sara Dobner is a member of the board of directors, Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and the chair of the Israeli identity program, UJA Federation.

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Support pours in as Rothman remains in coma

JANICE ARNOLD AND **SHERI SHEFA**
STAFF REPORTERS

The horrific terrorist attack on a Jerusalem synagogue last month that left Canadian-Israeli Howie Rothman clinging to life has sparked an outpouring of support and generosity from the Jewish community.

The Howie Rothman and Family Victim of Terror Assistance Fund, established late last month by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto after being approached by his Toronto-based family, has raised more than $100,000 from more than 700 donors, said Steven Shulman, the federation's campaign director.

"Usually we do not run funds to aid specific individuals and families. We made an exception in this case… Clearly this tragic situation has resulted in an extraordinary response, and UJA Federation is proud to have launched this fund," he said.

Rothman, a 54-year-old father of 10 who has been in a medically induced coma after being hit in the head, neck and arm with a meat cleaver during a Nov. 18 terror attack on the Kehilat Bnei Torah Synagogue in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighbourhood, could be in the ICU for months, his brother, Steven Rothman, recently told *The CJN*.

In an email update, he wrote that, "the pressure in his head seems to have gone down a bit, which is good. In addition, they did a procedure in the angiography room to insert an IVC (inferior vena cava) filter, something that looks like a metal umbrella, in order to prevent clotting in his legs that could lead to a pulmonary embolism."

An email by Ira Walfish, a Toronto Jewish community member, was circulated last week, asking for contributions to a second fund that is being handled by Beth Oloth, a charity that supports Jewish education.

Jeff Rothman, right, with his brother Howie (Chaim) Rothman, who is holding his first grandchild, Sarah, born just over a month ago.

Donations for Rothman and his family are being matched by anonymous American donors and must be received by Dec. 5. For more information, email Mordechai Rothschild at mrothschild@canaccordgenuity.com.

In Montreal, Shelley Rothman-Benhaim, Howie Rothman's sister, personally experienced the generosity of her own community, when members of her shul, Beth Zion Congregation in Côte Saint-Luc, raised money for airfare to Israel so that she could be by her brother's bedside.

Rothman-Benhaim, who left for Israel on Nov. 26, was accompanied by Beth Zion's spiritual leader Rabbi Boruch Perton, who said that in the days following the terrorist attack, money was quickly pledged among members to enable both of them to make the trip.

"I asked her [Shabbat] morning if she wanted to go, if she needed to be with her brother who lies 6,000 miles away in a coma, and, if so, she should not worry about the cost," said Rabbi Perton.

"He could stay in the ICU for days, weeks or even months," she said. The only glimmer of encouraging news came from her other brother Jeff, who also lives in Israel, in the Galilee, that the intercranial pressure in his brain has eased slightly.

The family also includes a sister Terri and their mother Mollie, who live in the Toronto area. None of them has been to Israel since Rothman was injured.

"I'm extremely grateful to [Beth Zion], more than I can say," said Rothman-Benhaim. "Just to be in the same room with him will help me cope."

She said donors in Toronto offered to send her mother, but at 80, she felt the trip would be too difficult.

On Nov. 27, Rabbi Perton blogged after his visit to the Kehilat Bnei Torah Synagogue that "the glass with bullet holes has not yet been replaced, nor has the door that the police smashed in order to gain access to the sanctuary." He also noticed a bullet hole in a volume of Talmud.

"I was introduced to the son of Rabbi Aryeh Kopinsky [one of the five people murdered], who just got up from shivah for his father. He was coming to pray for the evening service. He was a pillar of strength and conviction. He was even able to smile briefly."

Rabbi Perton also attended the dedication of a new Magen David Adom ambulance in memory of the five victims.

"It was attended by all the widows, including the wife of the Druze officer, Zidan Saif [a police officer who responded to the emergency call and later died of his wounds]…

"There were Jews from every Jerusalem walk of life. Black hats, knitted kippot, no kippot. Arabs were in attendance as well."

On Sunday, Rabbi Perton had planned to visit Druze villages and meet with an imam "because we so desperately need peace." ■

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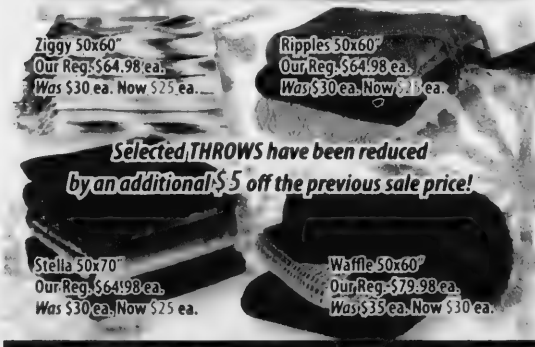

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Those were just some of the findings from a recent survey of *The CJN's* readers.

Commissioned by *The CJN* and prepared by KubasPrimedia, a firm that conducts retail research, audience measurement and pricing strategies for the newspaper industry, the survey looked at *The CJN's* "audience quality."

The survey found that *The CJN's* audience consists of loyal and avid readers who read the paper from top to bottom. Ninety per cent have read four of the last four issues, and each copy is read by an average of 1.7 readers. On average, *CJN* readers spend 37 minutes per week reading the paper edition of *The CJN* and another 23 minutes per week on our web site, cjnews.com.

Readers typically keep a copy of *The CJN* for 5.5 days and look at a particular issue 2.2 times.

The survey also found that 91 per cent of readers have completed some post-secondary education.

The reader profile shows *The CJN's* audience skews to the baby boom. Some 83 per cent of our readers are over 50 years of age and 65 per cent are baby boomers between 50 and 69, an "ideal target market of affluence and influence," the survey stated.

The CJN's advertisements figured prominently in our readers' purchase decisions.

"Overall, 21 per cent of readers primarily rely on *CJN* to make purchase decisions versus other media" in a variety of product or service categories, the survey reported.

At the top of the product/service list was event planning, followed by travel, dining out, purchasing real estate, entertainment, investments and home improvement.

Asked their views on *The CJN's* redesign, which was introduced last April, 97 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with the new look.

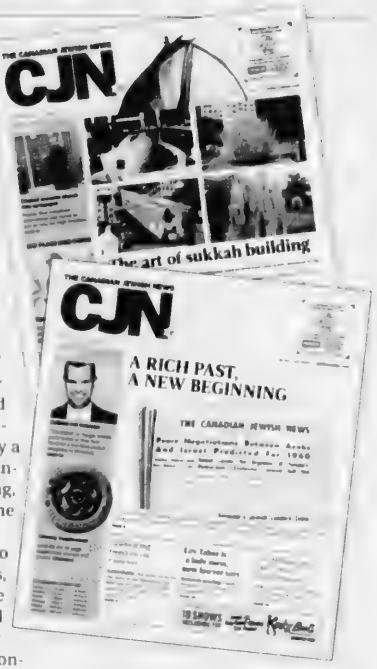
Readers described the paper as easy to read, giving it a grade of 3.5 out of 4, where 4 is excellent and 1 is poor, and also approved of its design and layout, which they gave a score of 3.3.

Readers also enjoyed the quality of writing, coverage of important news and our editorials. They rated it 3.2 out of 4 in terms of how interesting the paper is to read.

"We are grateful to the many readers who responded to our survey. The feedback is invaluable to us," said *CJN* president Elizabeth Wolfe. "The very positive response to our redesign and new content confirms our expectation that *The CJN* will continue to play a unique and significant role for the Canadian Jewish community – informing, reflecting and engaging Jews across the country.

"We endeavour to be responsive to the needs and interests of our readers, and the survey results indicate that we are succeeding. Further, our new, and younger, voices are attracting a new generation of readership, in print and online.

"Our next initiative, the redevelopment of our website, cjnews.com, will create a new platform for the future of *The CJN*," she said.



The survey was conducted online with 150 current readers of *The CJN*. The sample size produced a 95 per cent confidence level, with a 7.5 per cent margin of error, 19 times out of 20. ■

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Are Jews and blacks still allies?

JODIE SHUPAC
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Rabbi Susan Talve at an NAACP march in Ferguson, Mo., with recent bar mitzvah boy Terrel Wooten. PHILIP DEITCH PHOTO

There was a time when American Jews and blacks were linked in the struggle for civil rights.

Though relations between the two groups have at times been fraught with conflict, throughout the 20th century – and particularly in the 1950s and '60s – the alliance between Jews and African-Americans was evident in Jews' role in founding the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, and in Jewish leaders joining black leaders to push through the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act of the 1960s.

In some instances, Jewish figures projected spiritual meaning onto the struggle for social justice. After marching alongside Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1965 Selma Civil Rights March, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was famously quoted as saying, "I felt my feet were praying."

Jack Greenberg, former director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, likened his early days arguing civil rights cases before the U.S. Supreme Court to being in synagogue.

While demographics and history have played out differently in Canada, from the 1950s to the early 2000s, Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) engaged in dialogue with groups such as the Jamaican Canadian Association and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. Now some argue these ties have dissipated and North American Jews are no longer as committed to social justice.

Yavilah McCoy, African-American Jewish founder of Ayecha, a non-profit that advocates for Jews of colour in the U.S., wrote in *Tikkun* magazine last January about what appeared to her to be "a great silence among many of the white Jewish social activists I know," in the wake of the 2012 killing of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin in Florida and the acquittal of his killer.

Bernie Farber, a social activist and former CEO of CJC, said Canadian Jews have strayed from their duty to support other minority groups. "Working with the Canadian black community was once part and parcel of what we believed was necessary to create a climate of tolerance," he said. "Somehow, we've slipped away from that."

In light of the August killing of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo., and of the grand jury's decision last week not to indict him, as North American Jews, we might ask ourselves: do we feel an obligation to fight for the rights of marginalized groups around us, even when their causes no longer directly affect us? And if not, why not?

The weakened coalition between blacks and Jews can, McCoy argued, be partially attributed to the Black Power movement of the late '60s, which saw black activists shift from King's racially integrated approach to an ethos of "self-determination, self-defence tactics, and racial pride."

Though this was "crucial to the evolution of black consciousness and identity in America," it left many Jewish activists "with little input in the black community, and an anti-racism movement that seemed to be moving on without them."

She also cites dwindling anti-Semitism in the United States, compared to sustained anti-black racism, and the growing class division between Jews and African-Americans as factors.

Farber said the gulf between Jews and blacks resulted not from class disparity, but from North American Jews – particularly Canadian Jews – becoming more inwardly focused, fixated on self-preservation.

About a decade ago, he said, angst about Israel caused Jews to focus on Israel advocacy, downplaying associations with groups of colour. "Canadian Jews have become more parochial," he said. "Issues of social justice have taken second position… But by giving up on the social justice agenda, we do ourselves an incredible amount of harm… we've lost a lot of who we were."

In Canada, the Jewish response to Ferguson has been fairly quiet, but some leaders are voicing concern.

"The killing of Michael Brown should deeply disturb us and offend our sense of Jewish moral values," said Rabbi Aaron Levy of Toronto congregation Makom. "There's a strong history of part of the Jewish community identifying with the political left. Where that has gone is a good question."

Avrum Rosensweig, president of Ve'ahavta, said the "deep scars between the white and black communities" in the United States are "deeply troubling… We see that in Canada with our aboriginal community… Like Michael Brown, they are seemingly invisible, judged differently because of the colour of their skin."

While Jews may be less involved in activism, there are exceptions: some American Jewish groups are supporting protesters in Ferguson. In October, nearly 30 rabbis from across the country joined 200 interfaith clergy in peaceful rallies, asking police to repent.

The New York-based group Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), which co-ordinated protest groups after Martin's killing, is running a campaign for greater police accountability.

T'ruah, a multi-denominational network of rabbis and Jewish communities that works for human rights in North America and Israel, has expressed solidarity with the Ferguson protesters and is in the midst of launching a prison reform campaign. "Torah teaches us we shouldn't stand idly by the suffering of our neighbours," said Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, T'ruah's director of programs. "Policing and mass incarceration disproportionately affect this one part of our population, and we feel obligated to speak out."

Rabbi Susan Talve of the Central Reform Congregation in St. Louis, near Ferguson, has long worked to alleviate racism and poverty, developing links with black and Muslim groups. A fixture at the Ferguson protests, Rabbi Talve laments that Jews have become less engaged in social justice.

"We've gotten pretty complacent in America, as white people, but [events in Ferguson] have been a real wake-up call to the Jewish community to stand up for people who don't have a voice," she said. "That's certainly what Torah calls us to do."

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Holy Blossom renovations start this month

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Construction work on Holy Blossom Temple's effort to renovate the shul's 76-year-old building, which has been planned for more than a decade, will begin before the end of the month.

Tom Friedland, the chair of the synagogue's renewal project steering committee, said more than $19 million has been raised, which is 85 per cent of the total cost of Phase 1 – a fundraising threshold that needed to be reached before construction could start.

"What people are going to see initially is the preliminary work that is being done on the existing school wing to ready it to house all the activities during Phase 1 construction, which we hope will start sometime in the spring," Friedland said.

Phase 1 construction will include the building of a new central atrium, a family chapel, an administrative wing, a new elevator and an HVAC system.

But before those projects are tackled, the other areas of the shul have to be prepared to accommodate congregants who will still be "living" in the synagogue.

"We have to build a new elevator so the building will be fully accessible, because where the current elevator is, is right in the middle where the atrium is supposed to be. We have to build a new elevator, we have to build a temporary rabbinic suite on the third floor, we have to build some new washrooms and stairs and things like that. That is going to take us a few months through the spring so that we can be ready to do the demolition and construction in the [other area]," Friedland explained.

Holy Blossom Temple's executive director, Russ Joseph, left, and spiritual leader Rabbi Yael Splansky share news with congregants about the renewal project at the shul's annual general meeting last month.

An artist's rendering of the planned renovations.

He said he expects all of Phase 1 construction to be completed by mid-2016. Throughout the months that construction is underway, fundraising will continue.

"The plan is, as we start construction of Phase 1, to complete the fundraising of Phase 1 – the remaining 15 per cent – and then to roll right into Phase 2 construction," Friedland said.

"We won't start Phase 2 construction until we've raised 85 per cent [of its cost]... In a perfect world, we'll roll right from Phase 1 into Phase 2, but if not, we'll do it with as short a hiatus as possible as we raise the rest of the funds."

Phase 2 is expected to cost about $12 million.

"Phase 2 will include the renovation of the sanctuary, to restore its original splendour, it'll be an upgrading of our Philip Smith Congregational Hall. It'll be a new rabbinic suite on the second floor... on the third floor, where our current family chapel is, we'll turn that into a social hall," Friedland said, adding that there are also plans to address parking issues, creating a new parking area that connects Dewborne Avenue and Ava Road.

He said the renovation plans have led to a lot of positive energy within the congregation.

"A lot of it also goes along with the appointment of our senior rabbi, Yael Splansky, and her installation in the fall," he said.

Rabbi Splansky has taken the reins from Rabbi John Moscowitz, who is completing a three-year sabbatical in 2015.

"There is really a very good sense of community, and growth, and opportunity that has led to us raising the funds that we need to start this," Friedland said.

"Everyone has been very generous and everyone knows that it is important for Jewish continuity, it is important for Toronto Jewry overall, and it is important for Canadian Jewry." ■

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JNF Negev dinner breaks fundraising record

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The Jewish National Fund of Canada's most successful fundraising event to date, which paid tribute to the 2014 Negev dinner honoree Dr. Max Glassman on Nov. 23, closed with a special performance by actor and comedian Martin Short.

Short, who did stand-up, sang, danced, and performed skits with the Second City comedy troupe, was joined on stage at one point by Toronto mayor-elect John Tory, who laughed heartily throughout a staged interview with one of Short's most famous characters, celebrity interviewer Jiminy Glick.

After asking Tory for details about his background – "but not in too much detail because I don't really care" – Short asked him who he would have wanted to see as mayor of Toronto if he hadn't been elected.

"I'm not answering that question," Tory shot back.

"How do you see Toronto changing?" Short continued, after he and Tory greedily dug into a heaping plate of donuts.

"I have a suggestion. Have you ever thought maybe getting some cranes up there and doing some construction?" Short asked, eliciting big laughs from the crowd.

"It would be very popular in this room," Tory retorted. "How about getting some transit so that people can get around?"

Gianna and Max Glassman at the Jewish National Fund of Canada's 2014 Negev dinner

Before Short took to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre stage to close the event, Glassman, a physician who founded the Queensway Medical Centre and Clinic in Toronto more than 50 years ago and has been a JNF donor since the mid-1950s, spoke to the 1,500 people who gathered at the annual dinner and thanked his many supporters.

He said he hesitated when he was asked to accept the designation of being this year's Negev honoree.

"After I considered the potential impact on the citizens of Israel and elsewhere, I accepted the honour on the condition that all funds raised would be earmarked to help build a PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and health centre associated with the 120-year-old Herzog Hospital," Glassman said.

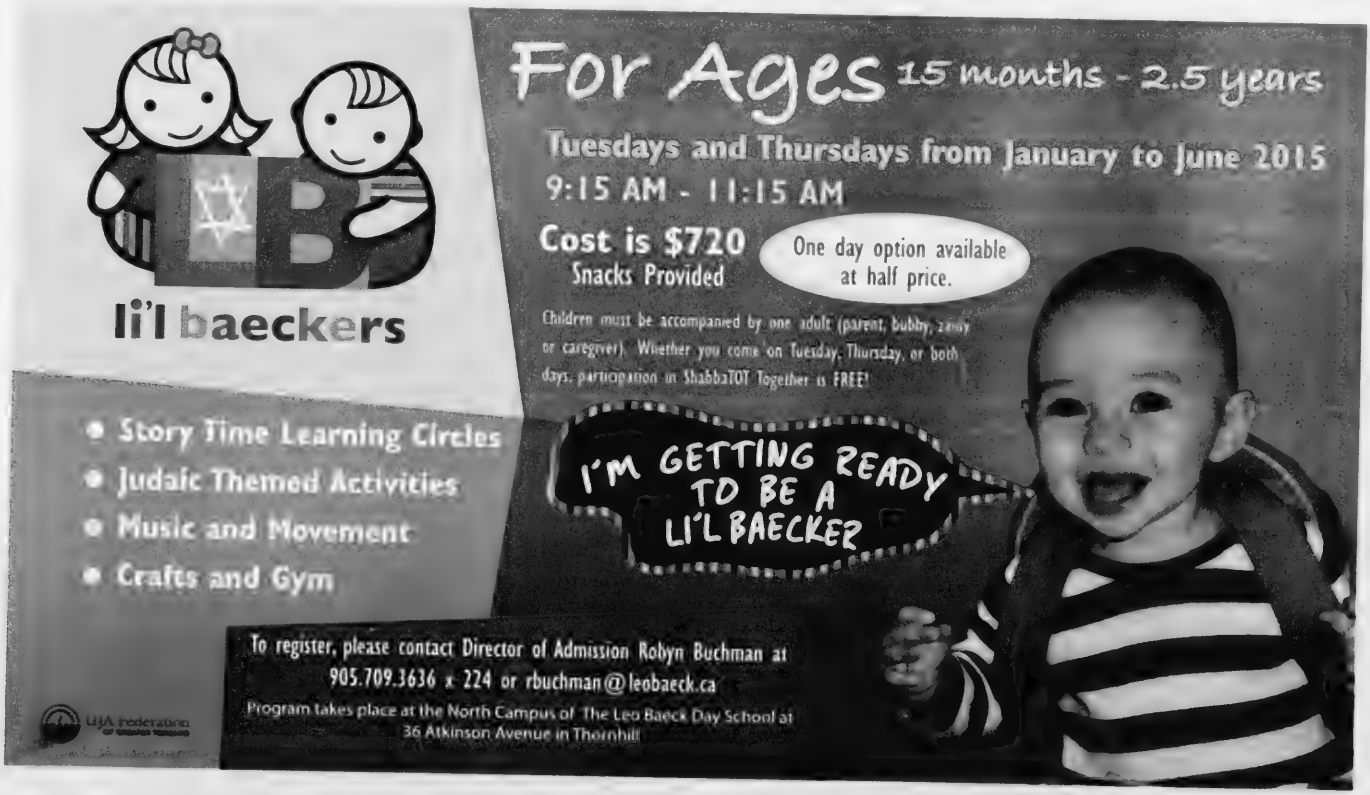
Proceeds from the 2014 campaign will build the Dr. Max and Gianna Glassman PTSD and Health Centre, a facility on Jerusalem's Herzog Hospital campus, where people who have suffered psychological trauma and other mental health issues can seek help.

"My dream is that our facility... will not only be a model of excellence in Israel, but will have international impact," Glassman said.

"It will become a blindingly bright beacon of light that will brighten the world and will be emulated not only in Israel and Canada, but throughout the entire world."

JNF Canada CEO Josh Cooper said that although the organization had yet to settle on a final tally, this year's Negev Dinner brought in the most money "by a long shot."

The previous fundraising record was $5.7 million, which was raised last year when Prime Minister Stephen Harper was the 2013 Negev dinner honoree. ■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Keshen honoured for her tireless work at Reena's helm

SHERI SHEFA
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Lorne Sossin, Reena's vice-chair of the board, left, and Sandy Keshen
BARRY SHAINBAUM PRODUCTIONS PHOTO

Sandy Keshen, founder, president and CEO of Reena for the past 41 years, was showered with praise at a special event in her honour to celebrate her retirement, and acknowledge her four decades of tireless service to the community.

The event, held at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue on Nov. 25, attracted more than 250 people who have been touched by Keshen over the years.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto president and CEO Morris Zbar, who served as the MC for the event, said Keshen had a big influence on his life.

He introduced a number of speakers including York Centre MPP Monte Kwinter, Beth Israel Beth David Beth Am Synagogue's spiritual leader, Rabbi Philip Scheim, and George Brown College's dean of preparatory and liberal arts Georgia Quartaro.

Zbar said, "We go through life, we meet thousands of people... and most of the people we meet are similar to us and are ordinary... In our lives, we meet one or two or three extraordinary people, and Sandy Keshen is one of those extraordinary people."

In a biography distributed to attendees, Keshen was described as "a visionary driven by an unwavering belief in social justice for individuals with a developmental disability. She reaches beyond her Jewish faith community to raise awareness, and works tirelessly on behalf of all vulnerable people, particularly those with a developmental disability and their families."

Keshen's accomplishments extended beyond the walls of Reena and benefited the entire Toronto community. In the early 1990s, Keshen led the way to establish the Metro Agencies Representative Council, upon which the current Toronto model of agencies working together is founded.

Through the Faith and Culture Network, Keshen helped Roman Catholic, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and other communities establish their own social agencies.

As for her work with Reena, a Jewish agency that serves people of all ages with developmental disabilities, Keshen promoted it as a learning organization.

"In 2002, Sandy observed that it was extremely difficult to recruit and retain quality employees to work in the group homes and programs offered by other similar agencies. She invested in training when there was very little offered by any colleges, universities or other educational organizations," her biography said.

The result was the investment by Reena's Learning and Development department in the development of courses that offer comprehensive training in the sector.

After connecting with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, she forged a partnership with George Brown College, the City of Toronto, and two other agencies to create a training program that provides students with a developmental disability counsellor certificate. This program is now in its 12th year.

One of Keshen's most recent accomplishments came in 2012, when the Reena Community Residence, a home that serves adults with special needs, opened at the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.

"We are truly happy to have this opportunity to express how much we admire Sandy for what she has done to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities and to help us personally with her kindness and support throughout her 41 years at the helm of Reena," Marilyn Raphael, Reena's past chair of the board, said at the event.

Rabbi Scheim, who was introduced as a close friend to both Keshen and Reena, said, "Because of your work and those who were inspired to support your work... you have strengthened our community because you understood the importance of providing a *makom*, a place where all could be loved and all can contribute."

Overwhelmed by the praise and gratitude expressed to her by friends and colleagues, Keshen briefly took to the podium to thank them for their efforts.

"The effort that you put forth, the messaging that you send... all of you have accomplished a great deal in order to make people with disabilities live with dignity and with respect," Keshen said.

"Thank you for being part of our family and thank you for putting together such a great effort." ■

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Above: Lyn and Mordechai Ben-Dat with grandchildren (l to r) Jack, Rae, Gabrielle and Ali, all students at Associated.

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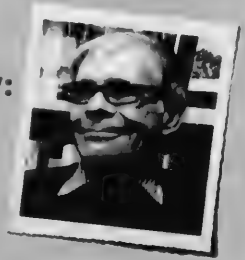

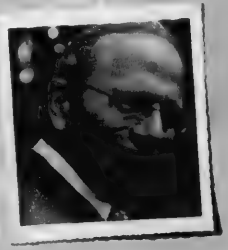

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Where there's a will, there can be a family fight

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Estate lawyers Les Kotzer, left, and Barry Fish

In his practice, wills and estate lawyer Les Kotzer has seen the worst of human nature – the greed, selfishness and downright meanness of family members toward each other.

But it wasn't until an incident a couple of years ago at his late father's hardware store in Toronto that he decided it was time to commit to pen and paper all the stories he's accumulated over the years.

After his brother Joel's death, Kotzer was liquidating the assets of the store, which had been a fixture in the Eglinton Avenue and Spadina Road area for decades. One of the people he met was the son of a former customer whom he remembered well from working in the store as a teenager. The man's father was always getting materials and tools to fix, upgrade and beautify their home. But when Kotzer met the former customer's son, he was told the son and his brother were involved in a heated dispute over the house, which they saw as just another asset in their parents' estate.

Kotzer felt the incident was symptomatic of what happens all too often, even in families that have gotten along for years. "I felt in my heart that the father was betrayed over the fighting over the home," he said.

The death of a parent or grandparent can lead to fights, disagreements and even family feuds as children, and in many cases also the heirs, fight over the estate.

In *The Wills Lawyers: Their Stories of Money, Inheritance, Greed, Family and Betrayal*, Kotzer and his colleague, Barry Fish, describe what they've seen over the years. The book is available for digital download from Kotzer's website.

The stories in it are universal, said Kotzer, who has penned four books in all. "It can happen to any family."

Sometimes the tales are heartwarming and display human nature at its best. Often they're dismal accounts of the lows to which people can sink. "People are going to laugh, to cry, and be shocked," he said.

In a story about elder abuse, Kotzer relates what a caller to a phone-in radio show told him after the show was off the air.

The caller was in a lineup at a supermarket, when an elderly woman in front of her found herself $5.85 short on a bill. She gave the woman the money and told her to forget about paying her back. But outside the store, the woman said she'd mail her the money next month when she received her allowance. Inquiring further, the caller found out the woman had accumulated substantial assets, but was convinced by her children to turn it over to them while she was still alive so that they would avoid estate taxes. Now reliant on her children, the woman said they yelled at her for spending too much when she asked for more of her own money.

The lesson, Kotzer said, is "don't give up control... It's not worth any tax savings."

In one of the more disturbing accounts, Kotzer relates the case of a young woman who was close to her grandfather. He promised she'd get all his wealth after he died. But in his will, his property was turned over to his daughter, who, in her will, transferred her estate to her husband. After both her grandfather and her mother died, her father met a new woman, started a new family and refused to give her anything.

"It's my money now," he told her, angering his daughter, who felt her grandfather's wishes were being betrayed.

Kotzer advises caution. "You can't assume your children will work it out after you die. You can't assume goodwill after you die. You have to do the planning."

And keep your will up to date. Kotzer tells of one successful investor who had millions in Internet stocks. While still flush, he drew up a will that made $10,000 gifts totalling $200,000 to a number of friends and family. He left the rest to his children, including his daughter, who had severe MS.

The value of the stocks fell to nearly nothing, and after the $200,000 was paid out, only $50,000 was left for his children. His son asked the others to give their $10,000 gifts to his sister, as he had done. But they refused. "We're keeping our gift," he was told.

Not all the stories are gloomy. One elderly couple came into his office to make a will. They contemplated whether to leave $25,000 to each of their grandchildren while they alive, or to do so in a will. After consulting one another for a few minutes, they decided against the will. That way, they said, "at least we'll get a hug and kiss", and the enjoyment of seeing their grandchildren benefit from their hard work. ■

Lawsuit seeks better chassidic schools

JANICE ARNOLD
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Yohanan Lowen lived 36 years in obscurity until last month, when he filed a $1.25-million lawsuit against the chassidic schools he says deprived him of a secular education. Today, he hopes to be a champion for thousands of others he claims are like him.

He's also suing the Quebec government and other public bodies he says failed to enforce the law and ignored this violation of his rights. Dec. 15 is the deadline he has set for the defendants to respond to his *mise en demeure* (demand letter) filed on Nov. 14. (Neither the government nor the schools have responded to requests for comment.)

In an interview, the soft-spoken Lowen said that only since leaving the chassidic world a few years ago has he acquired such basic skills as reading and writing in English and begun to integrate into society. He said he'd never even listened to the radio before.

"I received zero secular education… everything except Torah was forbidden. Some leaders said it was a sin [to learn anything else]," said Lowen, who lived from age 10 in the Tash community of Boisbriand, north of Montreal. "All I had was some English instruction one summer when I was 11, for about an hour a day, and that was voluntary."

The father of four, who turns 37 this month, said he has never been able to get a job other than occasionally teaching religious studies in the chassidic community. He said he still has psychological stress that has affected his eyesight. "I felt like I was walking on another planet," Lowen said of his entry into the outside world.

Today, he gives Talmud classes at "a liberal synagogue" and gets welfare. Two of his kids go to "modern Orthodox" schools and two to public ones. "I consider myself more Jewish now than when I was with Tash or in Outremont," said Lowen, who was without a kippah, wearing jeans and carrying a smartphone.

Lowen, who left Tash seven years ago and lived among other Chassidim in Outremont until 2010, was joined in the interview by Julien David-Pelletier, executive director of Clinique Juridique Juripop, the not-for-profit legal clinic that's representing him.

Quebec law is clear, David-Pelletier said. "The first responsibility for a child's education is with the parents. And if they don't provide it, the state must intervene." Some ex-haredi school students in New York and Israel have threatened similar action, but Lowen's is the first in the world, he said.

Lowen said many chassidic parents want a better education for their children, but their leaders are holding them back, and they're watching his case closely. "I've received support secretly from many Chassidim, including rabbis and authors here and in New York, Israel, Belgium, London."

Lowen was born in London, England, (his father grew up in the Tash community of Boisbriand). He attended Satmar and Neturei Karta schools in London. They also gave no instruction beyond religion, he claims.

Lowen is getting attention from French-language media, which for years had reported on "illegal" haredi schools. Liberal and Parti Québécois governments vowed to fix the situation in at least a half-dozen schools.

The Public Education Act requires all Quebec children from five to 16 to be in a legal school or home schooling and taught the mandatory curriculum.

Named in the suit are Yeshiva Beth Yehuda and Oir Hachaim d'Tash rabbinical college, which Lowen attended, and the attorney general of Quebec (acting for the education ministry), as well as the local youth protection office and public school board. The $1.25 million was based on potential lost earnings and to let Lowen get an education, as well as damages, David-Pelletier said.

He said the government knew when Lowen was a child that Tash schools weren't following the law. Youth protection and the school board are also culpable, he said, because a board must notify families when a child in its territory nears age five that they must be enrolled in a licensed school, and youth protection must act if they aren't.

David-Pelletier said they're open to having others join the lawsuit and turn it into a class action. ■

NICHOLAS JONES PHOTO

Japanese-Jewish ties continue

Toronto's Jewish community gave Japanese Canadians friendship and support in the years after their internment during World War II. Nu Mode Dress, owned by Henry Zagdanski and Fred Singer, employed many of them. At the sixth annual Sakura Gala, held Nov. 22 by the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC), the Sakura Award posthumously honoured Toronto's Jewish community, represented by Henry Zagdanski, whose award was received by his children Felicia Posluns, third from left, Ian Zagdanski, second from left, and Barry Zagdanski, right. With them, from left, are JCCC president Gary Kawaguchi, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss.

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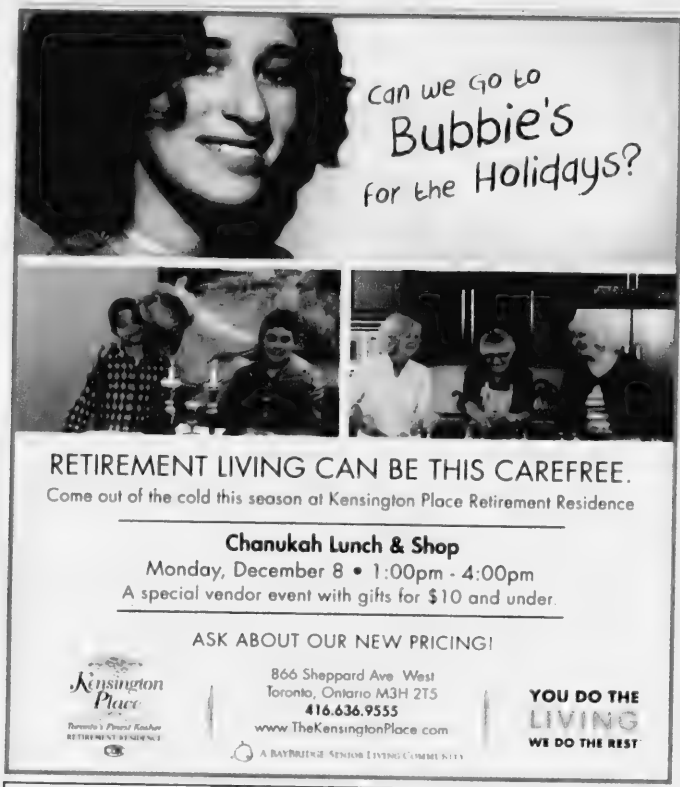

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Result of Concordia vote on BDS suspended

JANICE ARNOLD
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The divisive campaign at Concordia University over whether the student council should endorse the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel took an unexpected turn before the polls closed on the evening of Nov. 27, after three days of voting.

The ballots cast on that referendum question were sequestered on the order of the Concordia Student Union's (CSU) chief electoral officer André-Marcel Baril a few hours before the polls were to close.

They weren't counted, but rather "sealed and placed in a secure location" until an (unnamed) outside firm can offer a resolution that is "as objective as possible," he said on his CSU Facebook page Nov. 27.

Controversy has surrounded the question, the campaigns for and against it, and the way Baril himself has handled the matter. The wording of the BDS question had been contested by both the "yes" and "no" committees, and three versions were presented to the more than 35,000 undergraduates eligible to vote between the start of the campaign on Nov. 11 and the opening of the polls on Nov. 25.

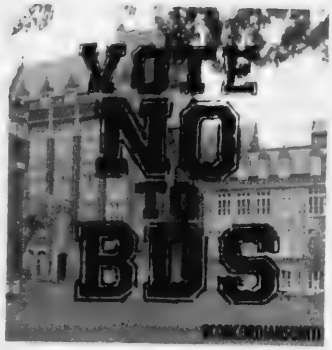
The final question was: "Do you approve of the CSU endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel?" It was one of eight referendum questions, and the only one not directly concerned with student affairs. It was also a byelection for vacant council seats.

"Over the past few days, I have been overwhelmed with complaints and issues relating to the conduct of both the 'yes' committee and the 'no' committee during and prior to the polling period. In addition, I have observed violations myself," Baril said on the Facebook page.

Given "the magnitude and complexity of the question being voted on, and the potential implications it could have on both Concordia and abroad," Baril said he decided the matter was too much for him to rule on alone. The CSU's legal representative recommended "an independent firm, which I have been told specializes in dealing with circumstances similar to what we are experiencing.

"Although I have not yet received a response from the firm, I anticipate that we will work together to reach a reasonable and fair decision on how best to move forward."

Lauren Luz, a spokesperson for the "no" committee, told *The CJN* on Nov. 28 that she found the decision "very strange" and wonders about the fairness of the CSU choosing "a third party", and why money should be spent this way.



This was one of the "no" committee's campaign posters at Concordia University.

"Everything is in the air now. We're not sure if this is going to hurt or help us," Luz said. She said voting, which continued after Baril's decision, was unusually heavy for a CSU byelection. "I heard it might have reached 3,000, which is amazing for Concordia. In the last byelection, only about 400 voted, which shows this is an issue that has to be discussed."

The campaign had taken a dramatic turn the day before the polls opened, late on the afternoon of Nov. 24, when an "emergency" meeting of the CSU judicial board was held at the request of the "no" committee, called Concordians United Against BDS.

The committee contended that the question, in its second version, was illegal and unconstitutional, according to CSU rules, and asked that it be dropped. They also charged that Baril had acted improperly in changing the original wording of the question at the request of the "yes" committee.

Baril, however, proved that he had the authority to "edit" referendum questions and that he did so before the seven-day cutoff.

At the "yes" committee's insistence, Baril modified the first question to include the addition "until Israel complies with international law and universal principles of human rights," and dropped the clause in the first version that described the boycott as including "all academic and consumer ties with any institution or company that aids in Israel's occupation of Palestine."

With the final change, new, separate ballots for the BDS question had to be printed late that night. The "no" committee was satisfied with the compromise, calling the final question "clear, neutral and fair."

BDS Québec, a coalition that includes the large labour unions and the political party Québec solidaire, endorsed the "yes" campaign. The Concordia Graduate Students' Association voted to support BDS in 2013.■

GUEST VOICE

Winnipeg must innovate if it wants a Jewish future

Joanne Seiff

Two Conservative congregations in Winnipeg are considering a shidduch. Well, if not a shidduch, then at least a merger - or even just living together. Both congregations have a declining, older membership with buildings in need of repair. Both congregations are "Conservative," but have dropped their memberships in the Conservative movement. Both want to maintain individual brands, but cannot see a way to maintain the status quo.

Years ago, faced with a declining Jewish population, the Winnipeg Jewish community started centralizing many of its institutions. Small Jewish day schools (both Orthodox and secular) were merged to form a community day school. The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg built a big campus into which they moved the day school, a JCC, the Jewish Child and Family Service, and other local Jewish organizations. You could meet a friend there for kosher food, go swimming, and pick up your kids from school. If you were lucky enough to get a coveted daycare spot, you might your send children to its preschool. For a long time, though, the building was quiet on Saturdays. For Shabbat, you had to go to a shul if you wanted to do Jewish.

Recently, things have changed. Despite the objections of local rabbis, the JCC opened up on Shabbat. You can now work out on Saturday morning. The school's chapel, however, remains empty. Even when a new shul asked if they could daven there, they were turned down. Apparently, there was an agreement that the chapel was available for school events only, and that the building's events had to remain impartial. No congregations could meet there. If they let one Jewish group pray there, well, they would have to let everyone pray there.

Some responded by saying, "Nu? Let everyone pray there! It's a Jewish organization, right?" Empty classrooms and other synagogue basements were also off limits to the new start-up congregation, filled with younger families and newcomers, which eventually died from lack of community support.

Meanwhile, another part of the

> *How about focusing on models from elsewhere that work.*

"agreement" between the federation and the congregations was that all the afternoon and weekend religious schools, run by synagogues, would be shut down. This would convince people to send their kids to the one remaining community Jewish day school. When this happened, those who chose to send their children to other schools lost the chance to offer their kids a Jewish education. If a family was unable to pay day school fees or felt uncomfortable about something taught there, or if it had children with special needs who required public school services, it might lose any chance of receiving a Jewish education. While one or two extracurricular after-school programs did remain, all of the larger congregations got out of the education business. A whole generation of Jewish kids missed out on Sunday school or mid-week Hebrew instruction.

As well, Jews in Winnipeg frequently shul-hop, particularly on the High Holidays. So, instead of offering High Holiday tickets as a complimentary part of membership, you have to buy tickets, even if you're a synagogue member.

As newcomers to Winnipeg, we began to see exactly why younger families no longer joined the large Conservative congregations. If you don't have any formal religious education opportunities for kids and one has to buy High Holiday tickets anyway, why bother joining? Why pay for building upkeep when the synagogue doesn't provide services that meet your needs?

Faced with ongoing Jewish population decline, the Winnipeg Jewish community began recruiting newcomers. Yet, when importing South American and Russian/Israeli Jews, they didn't envision how these new community members would fit into the old congregational model. On the whole, these newcomers didn't bolster synagogue membership. They didn't become members, even as they got better jobs and could afford it. They didn't even sign up their children for the day school. The Jewish daycare was already over-enrolled, and it took years to figure out how to make more Jewish childcare available for newcomers. By then, those kids were going to non-Jewish daycare and public schools. Thus, newcomers' children also lost Jewish education opportunities.

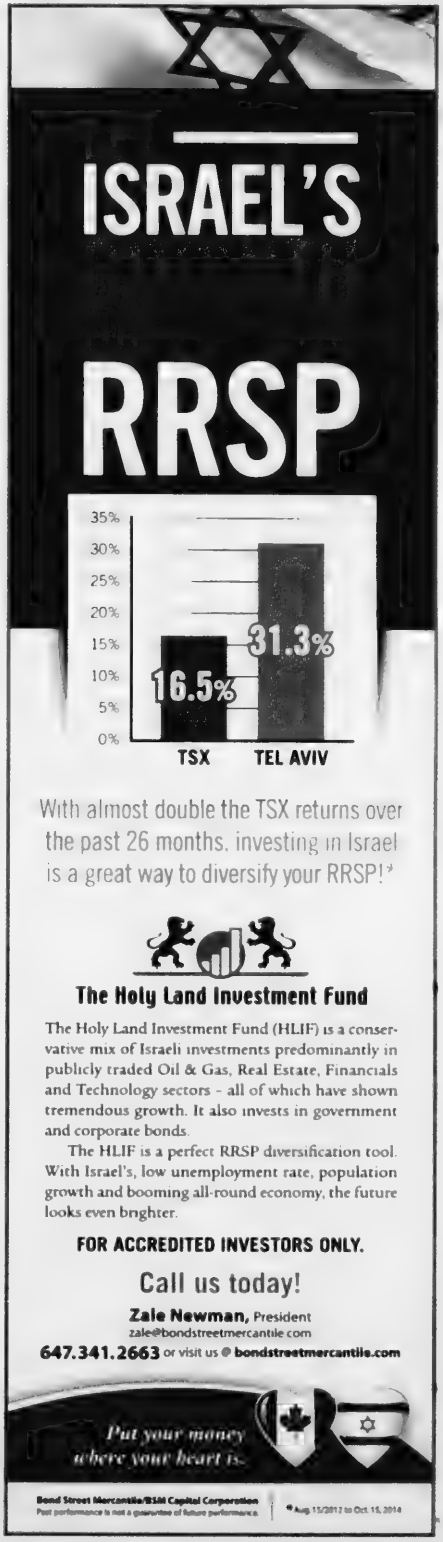
Now, the two largest congregations are discussing a merger, which would provide two simultaneous religious services in a shiny new building on the same JCC campus that houses the day school, swimming pool, and gym. Large swaths of the city won't have access to a neighbourhood congregation. This potential merger will only create a bigger elderly congregation that doesn't meet present or future needs.

How about focusing on models from elsewhere that work: buildings with classes and activities every day, with services for every age group, (including Shabbat and Jewish preschool options for young families) with affinity groups, chavurot, and committees designed to reach out to everyone? Instead, this community seems to be compounding its past choices. If the present models of consolidation haven't worked, why consolidate further?

The North American liberal Jewish movements churn out innovative educators, rabbis and cantors, as well as great lesson plans. There are organizations that consult when it comes to consolidating congregations and creating successful mergers. Yet, Jewish Winnipeg behaves as though these resources aren't valuable or that they don't exist. In what was once a very active and large Jewish community, even the federation's outgoing CEO suggested that without recruiting Orthodox newcomers, he didn't see Jewish religious practice remaining strong here.

What's the future for Winnipeg? For Jews who value liberal and egalitarian practice, the centralized campus may have a shiny, new, but empty synagogue building and a very crowded swimming pool. ■

Joanne Seiff is the author of two books and has written for the CBC and the Winnipeg Free Press.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Jews and Christians hold vigil for Jerusalem terror victims

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jews and Christians stood shoulder to shoulder last week in Toronto at a moving memorial/prayer service for the four rabbis and a police officer murdered by knife and hatchet-wielding terrorists in the Nov. 18 massacre at Har Nof, Israel.

Held Nov. 25 at Canada Christian College and sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada and Christians United for Israel (CUFI) one week after the attack, the solemn hour-long vigil heard local rabbis and ministers alternate prayers with declarations of resistance to terrorism. Five candles were lit in memory of the victims who were butchered as they recited morning prayers in synagogue, and of the Druse policeman who responded.

(As of last week, former Torontonian Howie Rothman, a Canadian-Israeli citizen wounded in the attack, remained in critical condition).

The brazen attack represents a line that was crossed, and "the unfortunate truth is, on far too many occasions and for far too many years, terrorists have been crossing these lines on a daily basis," B'nai Brith Canada CEO Michael Mostyn told the roughly 500 in attendance. "They proudly proclaim their desire to destroy not only the Jewish state but the Jewish nation as a whole.

"It is a story we have seen time and again throughout history: Jews slaughtered for no other reason than being Jewish." And, he added, those who threaten Jews "ultimately threaten us all."

Young people are being radicalized "to the same deadly agenda," Mostyn said, and "the threat is real and it is present in our country."

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Synagogue said the attacks were all the more senseless because Har Nof is in an uncontested part of west Jerusalem and the victims were completely removed from political events. All four rabbis killed were immigrants to Israel, he pointed out.

"Their whole lives were dedicated exclusively to the study of the Bible and the Talmud. They were teachers, they were fathers, they were grandfathers. And all they were doing was going to synagogue, as they did every single day of their lives.

"This is what makes it so painful, because it was so senseless."

Rev. Gary Beesley of Toronto's Evangel Temple noted that he and a group of fellow Christians had recently returned from Israel, "and those who were with me had a profound and quick education on how things are seen in different parts of the world [and] how truth can be turned into a lie."

Some 500 local Jews and Christians took part in a candle-lit vigil in memory of the five victims of the Har Nof massacre.
RON CSILLAG PHOTO

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation called on those present "to continue the prayers of the victims, to complete the words they were not able to complete."

Delivering a stirring prayer for Israel, the Jewish people and peace was Rev. Peter Marshall of Victory International Church in Hamilton, who earned applause when he said that while prayers for peace are needed, "I'd also like to pray for leadership because our world needs leadership."

Rabbi Howard Morrison of Beth Emeth Synagogue noted that one of the massacre's victims, Rabbi Moshe Twersky, had been his tutor at Maimonides Day School in Brookline, Mass., in 1973. Rabbi Morrison led the audience in reciting Psalm 23.

Good will come from the Har Nof tragedy, predicted Rev. Tony Soldano, lead pastor at All People's Church in Brampton, because God will fulfil prophesy and avenge the Jewish People.

Greetings on behalf of Israel were brought by Irit Stopper, deputy consul general in Toronto, who praised "decency and humanity" in the face of "fanatical barbarism" and said the friendship shown by Christians to the Jewish state is "deeply appreciated."

The gathering also heard from former B'nai Brith Canada CEO Frank Dimant and from Canada Christian College president Charles McVety, who also heads CUFI, the largest pro-Israel group in North America, with 95,000 members in Canada and 1.6 million in the United States.

National anthems and the *Kel Maleh Rachamim* prayer were recited by Beth Emeth Cantor David Edwards. ■

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CJCS Executive Director Selection Committee
Attention: Ms. Susan Rozansky
Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors
5700 Westbury Avenue
Montreal (Quebec) H3W 3E8

Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.
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Prière de faire parvenir votre curriculum vitæ, accompagné d'une lettre de présentation, à l'adresse suivante d'ici le 24 décembre 2014 :

Comité de sélection du directeur général du CJCA
À l'attention de : Madame Susan Rozansky
Centre juif Cummings pour aînés
5700, avenue Westbury
Montréal (Québec) H3W 3E8

Nous communiquerons uniquement avec les candidats retenus pour une entrevue.
Toutes les candidatures seront traitées en toute confidentialité.

Good palliative care alleviates suffering

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, life-cycle director at Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, says the congregation has supported the Humanistic Judaism movement's position in favour of PAD since 1995. However, she says Oraynu members will soon be voting on a new draft statement that was created as an update on the issue. "We affirm the sanctity of life, while at the same time we value the right of an individual to choose to hasten the end of life when the suffering is intolerable."

Rabbi Goldfinger, who is also one of the spiritual leaders at Dying with Dignity, says Oraynu's statement includes safeguards that call for the protection of vulnerable people and for assessments of individuals wanting to proceed with PAD to ensure they're properly informed and have full mental capacity.

As well, there are recommendations for the government to provide more professional support to individuals considering PAD and to increase palliative care services.

Dr. Michael Gordon, medical program director for palliative care at Baycrest and a *CJN* columnist, points out that physician-assisted suicide (PAS), another common term for PAD, is a misnomer. "Technically, PAS means the doctor gives someone a prescription for pills that will bring on death. What people think is PAS is actually euthanasia," because the physician is actually administering medication to cause death.

He stresses that good palliative care within the scope of medical practice can alleviate much of a patient's suffering and is in accordance with Jewish law.

The palliative care physicians in his unit "find marvellous ways – complex cocktails to achieve goals of comfort," he says, but he cautions that these drugs must be administered carefully.

"Sometimes, in order to achieve those goals, you have to give medications that increase comfort, but shorten life. This is a secondary effect of the opiates. If you learn how to use opiates properly, you don't shorten life, you enhance it."

Despite the best palliative care, many patients suffer physically, spiritually, psychologically and existentially, and ask to die, says Buchman. He currently provides home-based community care through the Temmy Latner Centre. "A doctor is obligated to investigate a patient's wish to die," he says, and when the underlying issues are addressed "it [the wish] often goes away."

He believes PAD will ultimately be legalized throughout Canada, but referral to a physician may present a potential area of conflict between patients' rights and doctors' religious and spiritual values.

"How do you balance the right of the physicians to opt out of making a referral if that goes against their core values and beliefs, but it's the right of somebody else?"

"The doctors I'm speaking to are shaking their heads in bewilderment," says Rabbi Poupko about his discussions with Quebec physicians. "The judicial solution, [Bill 52] as they see it, is facilitating or aiding and abetting death."

Health lawyer Shelley Birenbaum says that if PAD is legalized in Ontario, physicians must follow the guidelines of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, explaining that the regulatory college expects doctors to inform patients when they cannot provide a service that conflicts with their moral beliefs. "They are also obligated to discuss all treatment options that may be available and appropriate, based on a patient's clinical needs."

She says doctors' attitudes are changing: at this year's annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, 90 per cent of the physicians voted to follow their conscience if PAD is legalized.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko

But Rabbi Poupko argues that the majority of doctors in Canada are opposed to PAD. "It's their responsibility to heal. Taking a life is not their mandate."

Birenbaum, an ambassador for Dying with Dignity, urges the Jewish community to engage in more debate on PAD. "We are living longer and this issue is already pressing as more people age and medical technology advances."

Lawyer and businessman Jack Pasht, a member of the board of directors of Dying with Dignity, views PAD as a social justice issue that should naturally attract interest and support within the Jewish community. "It's about having autonomy and choice at the end of life when you are most vulnerable. Do you want the justice system to determine how much suffering you must bear, or do you want to be able to discuss it with your family and doctor?"■

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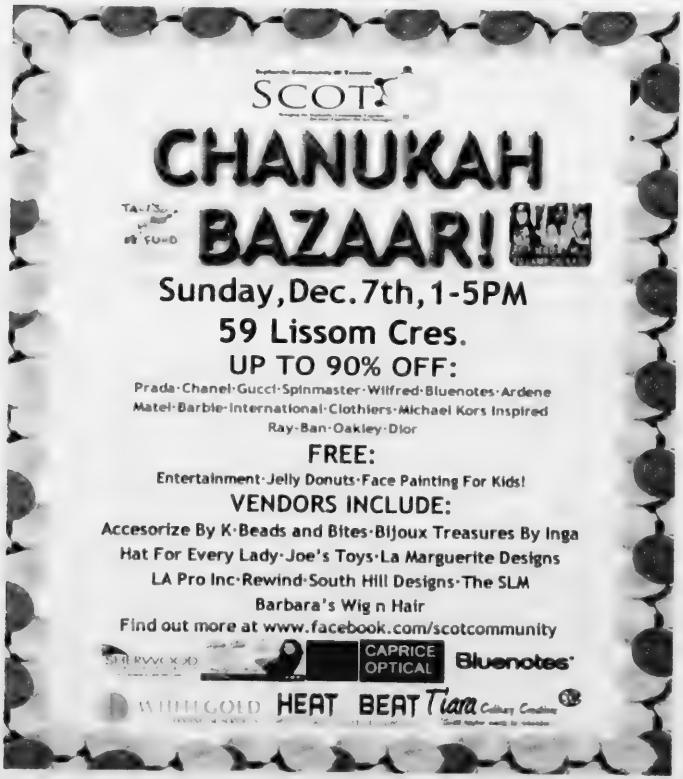


Campus advocacy effort starts

From left, vice-chair of Hillel of Greater Toronto Micki Mizrahi; Hillel of Greater Toronto executive director Marc Newburgh; Hillel's director of Israel engagement, education and advocacy Lior Cyngiser; and Hillel's chair of the board Ed Prutschi

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Ryerson University and the University of Western Ontario are part of a five-campus pilot program launched by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and Hillel International to bring a "more holistic picture of Israel" to North American campuses.

Launched last month, the initiative, called Israel Engaged Campus, will involve the two universities mentioned above and three American schools – University of California San Diego, Philadelphia's Temple University, and George Washington University in Washington, D.C. – all of which will serve as "testing grounds" for plans to reach wider circles of Jewish and non-Jewish students.

"I always hoped that we could establish a very impactful relationship with Israel across all the parts of campus," said Donald Sylvan, executive director of Hillel Ontario.

"That has been very difficult, because we haven't had the focus, we haven't had the resources, we haven't had the personnel, but now the kinds of ideas that we have can really move the ball forward on Israel engagement. We can actually have campus communities as well as the Jewish students within those campuses establish a more comprehensive relationship with Israel than could ever have been possible before we undertook this."

Hillel of Greater Toronto has hired four Israel Campus Engagement (ICE) student interns at Ryerson who will work to build relationships with Jewish and non-Jewish students in their faculties. Each is responsible for engaging 25 students. From that group, five to 10 students will be asked to take part in a monthly educational program and develop an initiative that connects their field of study to Israel, and to make it accessible to a broader student audience.

"Even though I will engage Jewish and non-Jewish students on campus, my ultimate goal is to engage those who don't see Israel as a contributor to the field of social work," said Rebecca Katzman, a social work student at Ryerson and one of the four interns. "Although this internship is not about politics, I want people who are not Jewish, or do not know much about Israel to realize that Canada and Israel have many similarities in our beliefs and in the way they treat their citizens."

Katzman said she's excited to build on the number of faculty and students with links to Israel. "When I attended the Ryerson Student Union meeting last year to vote against the endorsement of the [boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign], a greater presence of faculty and students who sided with Israel would have been instrumental."

The four student interns represent four different fields: social work, child and youth care, business and law, and graphic communications management.

Lior Cyngiser, Hillel's director of Israel engagement, education and advocacy said that at Ryerson, where students are professionally focused, the program will "give students networking opportunities and growth in their profession as well as the opportunity to integrate their connection with Israel into their professional lives."

Sylvan said that over the past year and a half, he's met with JAFI and Hillel International leaders and convinced them that Canadian campuses were a good fit for the three-year pilot program. "We had one that we put forth in our argument as the paradigm for an urban commuter campus – and that's the Ryerson one, [while] Western… is the paradigm for a residential campus that is not in a large urban area," Sylvan said.

Sylvan added that while the interns in Ryerson and Western have the same goal, "they have to have a different personality, because the campuses are so different."

He said he expects to see the program at every Ontario university. "We have the infrastructure, so it'll be easy… we can seamlessly integrate this when we learn lessons." ■

Koffler Centre holds vintage clothing sale

CJN STAFF

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is holding a two-day designer vintage clothing sale at the Koffler Gallery, located in the Artscape Youngplace building at 180 Shaw St., on Dec. 7 and 8.

Koffler Couture will feature deals on vintage clothing and accessories – both women's and men's – including designer clothes, shoes, jackets, handbags, hats and belts.

Designers include Prada, Chanel, Yves St. Laurent, Louis Vuitton and Hermes.

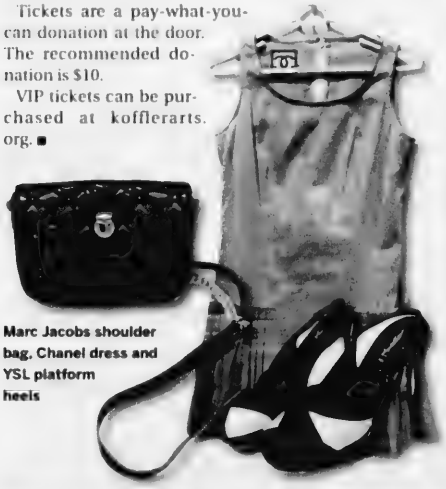
Proceeds from the event will go toward supporting the Koffler Centre of the Arts, a contemporary Jewish arts and cultural institution that serves audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

On Dec. 7, a VIP preview will grant early entry to the sale, plus a complimentary glass of champagne. The cost is $50.

The regular sale will be held from 1 to 6 p.m. on Dec. 7 (Sunday) and from 12 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 8 (Monday).

Tickets are a pay-what-you-can donation at the door. The recommended donation is $10.

VIP tickets can be purchased at kofflerarts.org. ■



Marc Jacobs shoulder bag, Chanel dress and YSL platform heels

Correction

The Nov. 20 story "Vancouver and Israel both lack affordable housing" contained incorrect information about an event sponsor. The panel discussion was sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada and co-sponsored by Temple Shalom and Generation Squeeze. *The CJN* apologizes for the error.

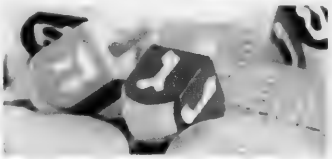
Clarification

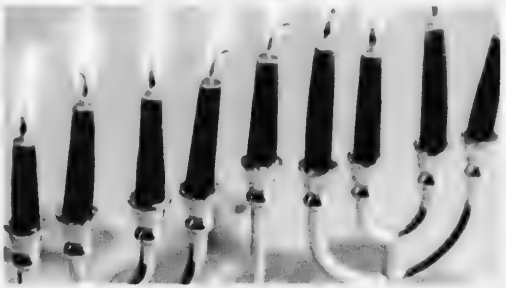
In the article "Meet the Jewish matchmaker-in-chief" (*CJN*, Nov. 20), the wrong Tova Weinberg was identified in a photo.

JCCs of Greater Toronto and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto present

CHANNUKAH

Across the city!





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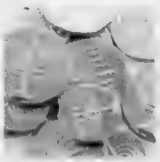
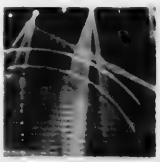
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 • 2PM - 5PM
Chanukah Family Fun Fair – music, magic, crafts. Pre-registration: $15/family; Day of: $20/family (up to 5)



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 • 12:30PM – 2:30PM
Chanukah Latke Lunch and Concert with The Sisters of Sheynville Quartet
High-energy Yiddish swing and Klezmer music.
Admission: $10, Pre-registration required by Friday, December 12



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 4, 2014

Ottawa recalls Jewish refugees from Arab countries

JORDANNA TENNEBAUM
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, OTTAWA

For the first time ever, the Sephardi Association of Ottawa (SAO) marked Nov. 30 as the day of commemoration for Jewish refugees from Arab and Muslim countries.

In response to the Israeli Knesset's June 2014 decision to recognize the date as the official day of remembrance for these refugees, the SAO held a night of tribute devoted to the 850,000 Jews who fled their homes in Arab and Muslim countries around the time of the foundation of Israel in 1948.

"It is about time we told this story. It is about time we had this conversation. This story is ultimately a personal one. It is about people's lives being uprooted. Property abandoned literally overnight," SAO president Clemy Srour told some 100 people at Ottawa's Soloway JCC.

Srour shared his sentiments alongside representatives from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the Embassy of Israel. Together, attendees recognized the plight of Jewish refugees who migrated to Israel during the 1940s from countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Algeria and Egypt.

The SAO ceremony followed the Canadian Parliament's recent decision to join the Knesset in acknowledging the experiences and fate of Jewish refugees from Arab and Muslim countries.

"Last March, the government of Canada adopted a report on the status of Jewish refugees from Arab lands. The government of Canada officially recognized their suffering, and placed it alongside the tales of the Palestinians," Israeli Ambassador to Canada Rafael Barak said.

Canada's embrace of the report, put forward by the House of Commons standing committee on foreign affairs and international development, follows similar pronouncements by the U.S. Congress, which in 2008 unanimously supported a resolution recognizing the history and rights of Jewish refugees from Arab and Muslim lands. The decision was made in the interest of what the government called a comprehensive approach to peace in the Middle East.

Members of Ottawa's Jewish Sephardi community were eager to share their stories of persecution, discrimination and abuse.

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak

Congregation Beth Shalom Cantor Daniel Benlolo spoke of his childhood in Casablanca, Morocco. Prior to his family's migration to Quebec in the early 1970s, Benlolo lived among approximately 300,000 Moroccan Jews, often recognized as the largest Jewish population within the Arab and Muslim world.

"At the peak, Jews represented about 10 per cent of Morocco's total population. The majority of the Jewish population left during Israel's War of Independence and the Six Day War, fearing of course the violence and the outbursts," Benlolo said.

While Benlolo brought some of his favourite parts of Moroccan fashion, culture, cuisine and music to North America, his upbringing was, like many others fleeing Arab and Muslim nations, fraught with pain and distress.

"One day, my school friends were best friends, and then when the war broke out in Israel, we weren't allowed to speak to each other, because their parents made sure they would not speak to a Jew. It was very difficult as a young person," Benlolo said.

Several Sephardi testimonials expressed a sense of optimism and a desire to begin life anew in Israel.

Iraqi native Edward Atraghji, who now lives in Canada, marvelled at the high level of positivity maintained by fellow Sephardi refugees after their arrival in Israel. "In spite of all the problems that we had, the cafes were always full, the beaches were always full, the people always happy," Atraghji said. ■

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Netanyahu meets with ministers to save coalition

RENEE GHERT-ZAND
JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was to hold private meetings with his senior ministers this week, in a last-ditch effort to patch up his fast fraying coalition.

The prime minister is expected to decide in the coming days whether to call for early elections, and the outcome of the meetings with the ministers – leaders of the parties that partner his Likud in the coalition – will likely drive that decision.

Against a backdrop of growing unrest surrounding the "Jewish state" bill, which would enshrine Israel's Jewish status in its constitutional Basic Laws, Netanyahu met with Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman (Yisrael Beitenu party) on Sunday, and was set to meet with Finance Minister Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid), Justice Minister Tzipi Livni (Hatnua), and Economy Minister Naftali Bennett (Jewish Home) at press time last Monday. Livni and Lapid have said they will vote against the "Jewish state" bill if it is presented in the Knesset in its current form, even at the price of bringing down the government.

Earlier Sunday, Netanyahu struck out at his coalition members during the weekly cabinet meeting, saying recent ultimatums or threats to withdraw from the coalition issued by some ministers were making it impossible to run the country.

Netanyahu told ministers that it was impossible to continue, with the leadership fraying over issues such as the state budget and the "Jewish state" bill, and issued a thinly veiled threat to dissolve the government and call new elections

"There are important missions ahead of us," Netanyahu said. "In order to carry them out, we need government stability and sound management. Unfortunately, this is not what's happening. Lately, almost not a day goes by without diktats, or threats, or threats to resign or ultimatums of all sorts.

"I hope that we can restore sound management [of state affairs]. It is what the public expects of us. Only in this way can we run the state. And if not, we'll draw the necessary conclusions," he said.

Netanyahu's remarks came amid growing speculation that he may call for early elections if coalition members cannot resolve their differences over a nationality bill that was set for a cabinet vote Wednesday.

One Labor lawmaker proposed that the Knesset adopt the 1948 declaration of independence, with its call for equality for all citizens, as part of Israel's quasi-constitutional Basic Laws.

Thousands of demonstrators rallied against the proposed bill. FLASH90 PHOTO

On Saturday, several thousand people came out to rally against the "Jewish state," outside the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem.

The bill, if passed into law, would enshrine Israel as the Jewish nation-state and ensure national self-determination and individual rights for Jews, but only individual rights for non-Jewish citizens.

With polls showing Netanyahu's Likud and other right-wing parties enjoying the support of the majority of Israeli voters, a sense of urgency compelled backers of Labor, Meretz, Hadash and Peace Now to come out to protest against the proposed "Jewish state" bill and recent calls by right-wing politicians and activists to change the status quo on the Temple Mount.

"I'm skeptical about the strength of the left, but that is what made me feel I had to come out tonight," said Sharon Rosenfelder of Jerusalem.

"I'm not sure that we can change anything, but we have to have to keep trying. Sitting at home is not going to help anything," said Jerusalem resident Hila Peleg, who attended the rally with her husband and young children. "Israel is on the edge. This is our chance to make a change," she said.

Peleg's sentiments that this is a do-or-die moment for the left, and for the country as a whole, were echoed by many of the rally's speakers.

"Now is our great test," former Meretz leader Yossi Sarid told those gathered. "If we stand, the left will strengthen. If we don't, the left will disappear." "If Israel will not be democratic, it simply won't continue to exist," he added.

Former Shin Bet director Carmi Gillon warned that together, the "Jewish state " law and attempts to change the status quo on the Temple Mount could destroy the state of Israel.

Meretz leader Zehava Gal-On pointed out that the rally was taking place on Nov. 29, the 67th anniversary of the UN vote to partition Mandate Palestine, which led to the creation of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

As she spoke of Jerusalem sitting on a powder keg and the prime minister's leading the country into a religious war, word spread through the crowd that Jerusalem's Hand in Hand bilingual (Hebrew and Arabic) school had been torched and covered in anti-Arab graffiti.

A classroom of the Max Rayne Hand In Hand Jerusalem School was set on fire and "Death to Arabs" and "There is no coexistence with cancer" were among the anti-Arab epithets spray-painted on the school walls.

A preliminary police investigation found that the blaze was intentionally set.

A few hours later, a Tel Aviv synagogue was reportedly vandalized in protest of Israel's nation-state bill.

"In a place where the Jewish state bill will be legislated, books will be burned," read the graffiti painted Sunday on a wall of the Tel Aviv International Synagogue.

A pile of burned books – none of them religious texts – was left next to the wall. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Canadian-Israeli woman reportedly kidnapped by Islamic State

JTA
JERUSALEM

Unconfirmed reports over the weekend said a Canadian-Israeli Jewish woman who joined Kurdish forces in their fight against the Islamic State was taken captive by the jihadist group.

The capture of Gillian Rosenberg, 31, and several other female fighters was reported on blogs and Islamist websites, Israeli media reported. Rosenberg reportedly was captured by jihadists near the Syrian city of Kobani in recent days.

Israeli intelligence and security services did not verify the reports to Israeli media, and Israel's Foreign Ministry also was looking into them.

There were also conflicting accounts over the weekend from friends who reported that she was safe, as well as from Kurdish forces who denied she had been kidnapped.

Rosenberg, who hails from White Rock, B.C., attended Maimonides Jewish High School in Vancouver (now called King David High School), where she was valedictorian in 2001, her graduating year.

Speaking from Iraq, Rosenberg told Israel Radio about a month ago that she was training with the Kurdish YPG with plans to fight the jihadist group also known as ISIS or ISIL in Syria.

"They [the Kurds] are our brothers. They are good people. They love life, a lot like us, really," Rosenberg said.

Rosenberg, known in Israel as Gila, immigrated to Israel from Canada in 2006 and served as an instructor in an Israeli army search-and-rescue unit.

In 2009, she was extradited from Israel to the United States for her involvement in what the FBI called a lottery prize scheme that mostly targeted the elderly. She spent four years in a U.S. prison.

Israeli citizens are barred from visiting enemy states including Syria and Iraq, and the government has been cracking down on Arab-Israelis returning from fighting in those countries.

Old high school friends in Vancouver who declined to speak on the record to *The CJN* last month expressed shock and concern for her safety when they learned Rosenberg had joined the Kurdish fighters.

Shoshana Burton, one of her high school teachers, remembered her as a shy young woman.

"[She] became very passionate when she recognized opportunities to be involved with the school's annual mitzvah day where we volunteered in the community. She was compassionate and was fascinated with Israel," Burton told *The CJN* last month." ■

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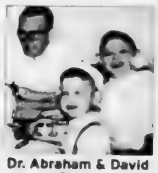

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OPINION

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

Gerald Steinberg

When I first came to Jerusalem as a student in 1971, I wrote my return address in outsized letters to stress that I had returned home. This was in the shadow of the 1967 war and the rebuilding of the Jewish Quarter after the destruction and deliberate desecration during the Jordanian-Palestinian occupation.

Like other Jews catching up for the lost centuries, I explored every building and alleyway, breathing in the immense history, architecture and religious significance.

The Hebrew word Yerushalayim means City of Peace, but we have witnessed as least as many periods of war as we have had peace. The Byzantines followed the Romans, and then came the Arab conquest (637 CE). A few centuries later, during the Crusades, Jews and Muslims were massacred, and the violence continued as Muslim leaders retook Jerusalem. After each wave of destruction (what would be called ethnic cleansing in today's parlance), Jews began to return to this holiest of cities, first in small numbers and under very difficult conditions, but eventually returning to a significant presence. A census in the mid-1800s (during the Ottoman occupation) showed that the majority of residents were Jewish.

In the last century, Zionism and the return of the Jewish People to the realm of politics and national sovereignty added many more Jews, but also triggered more hate and violence. While previously an Islamic backwater, once the Jews began to become more visible and active, Muslims reasserted exclusivity. An ambiguous reference in the Qur'an to a far mosque that Muhammad was said to have visited on a magical night journey on his horse was associated with Jerusalem, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount (the Haram al-Sharif in Arabic) suddenly grew in importance.

In parallel, the Muslim world in general, and Palestinians in particular, promoted a myth that denied any Jewish connection to Jerusalem. Preachers in mosques would repeat this myth while demonizing Jews, and the false "narrative" was taught to children of all ages in schools as well as repeated in the media. In July 2000, at the Camp David "peace summit" with then-U.S. president Bill Clinton, then-Palestinian president Yasser Arafat rejected all plans that involved sharing Jerusalem – he told the Americans that there was never a Jewish Temple in the city. And at the United Nations and other frameworks dominated by Arab and Islamic countries, Israel is absurdly accused of "Judaizing" Jerusalem.

To manipulate and fan the hate and violence, rumours have circulated periodically claiming "the Jews" were planning to destroy the mosque, rebuild the Temple, or take other drastic measures that would endanger the Islamic narrative and sacred sites. Such incitement triggered a pogrom in 1929, which led to the massacre of the Jewish community in Hebron. Similar pogroms were launched in November 1947 (after the UN adopted the Partition Plan), as well as in 1991 and again in 2000. (Palestinian public relations teams spun this into the "al-Aqsa intifadah" – a highly misleading term adopted quickly by journalists and public officials, including many Israelis.)

We are again in a period of terrible and tragic bloodshed, following the same pattern. While pundits and politicians give us advice, it usually takes the form of blaming the Israeli "occupation" of "Palestinian east Jerusalem" and "settlements" as the cause of terror. In contrast, none of the peace projects funded by European governments and private donors teach Muslims about Jewish history in Jerusalem, about the ethnic cleansing of the Old City in 1948, and the need for tolerance and compromise. Instead, they propagate the Palestinian incitement and mythologies, and under the façade of human rights, Israel is condemned for defending its citizens from these inhuman attacks.

For 2,000 years, Jews scattered around the world prayed daily for the peace of Jerusalem, and ended every Passover seder with the words "Next year in Jerusalem." Now that we're back, we're not going to leave again, regardless of the terror and incitement. ■

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Canada maintains level of sanctions on Iran

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

When the U.S.-led P5+1 group of nations agreed last week to extend the deadline for talks with Iran over its nuclear program, while keeping in place sanctions relief, some observers considered it a failure of diplomacy.

But others welcomed it as an important step toward the goal of ensuring Iran is prevented from developing nuclear weapons.

Canada commended the P5+1 – the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia – for its "earnest efforts," but said it would not be easing its sanctions, which will remain "tough and in full force."

"Effective sanctions have brought the regime to present a more moderate front and open the door to negotiations. [This] deal cannot be abused or undermined by deception. The Iranian people deserve the freedom and prosperity that they have been denied for too long by the regime's nuclear ambitions. Canadian sanctions will remain tough and in full force," said a statement by Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird.

The Liberals said developments were "an important first step toward addressing our concerns with Iran's nuclear program.

"Our objective remains a successful comprehensive agreement that ensures that Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon. The deal reached last night in Geneva is a positive first step, but it requires continued vigilance and further concrete, verifiable measures," the party's foreign affairs critic, Marc Garneau, said Nov. 24.

U.S. President Barack Obama hailed the deal. "For the first time in nearly a decade, we have halted the progress of the Iranian nuclear program, and key parts of the program will be rolled back." The deal "cut[s] off Iran's most likely paths to a bomb" and "creates time and space" to negotiate a comprehensive agreement, he said.

The Jewish community was also divided over the deal. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), called "this seven-month deadline and sanctions relief extension... the latest in a series of failed diplomatic exchanges with Iran spanning a decade.

"Time and again, the Islamic Republic has used these overtures to block inspections, delay further sanctions, and accelerate the advancement of its nuclear capabilities," said CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

"Despite the P5+1 floating concessions on virtually every aspect of the Iranian nuclear program, the regime has remained uncompromising in its demands. The extension of talks within this dynamic represent a dangerous failure of the diplomatic process," he said. He added that the international community must "redouble its efforts" to "prevent Iranian nuclear weapons development" and to maintain sanctions "to give negotiations a chance of success."

Over the years, Canada has implemented tough measures against Iran aimed at hampering its nuclear program and weakening its economy. In 2012, it declared Iran a state sponsor of terror, and in September of that year, it suspended relations and closed its embassy in Tehran.

Canada's sanctions go beyond those imposed by the UN Security Council and Canada's allies. In November 2013, the P5+1 eased sanctions as part of a joint plan negotiated with Iran. It requires Iran to suspend or freeze some elements of its nuclear program while affording the country billions in sanctions relief, which helped spur a moderate economic recovery.

Arie Raif is happy talks with Iran are continuing and believes Canada should re-open its embassy. "Canada, by closing its embassy, is making a mistake. You have to negotiate with your enemies," he said. "We don't know how the deal will work out in June or July of next year."

Raif, an ex-Israeli diplomat now living in Toronto, said the P5+1 can't abandon talks. "It is too late to attack Iran. Right now, you have to negotiate, and Obama is doing the right thing." As the economic situation deteriorates, thanks largely to an OPEC-induced drop in oil prices, and fearing growing support for internal opposition, Iran will be compelled to make a deal, he said.

Former justice minister Irwin Cotler offered a different perspective. The Mount Royal Liberal MP backs Canada's retention of sanctions. He said there's a danger Iran will continue to develop its nuclear program and "stall with impunity."

It has refused to comply with international requests to disclose past nuclearization activities. "If they do not disclose what they've done in the past, how can you trust them in the future?" he asked.

Cotler is worried Iran will use the next few months to continue its enrichment and avoid detection. A nuclear-armed Iran will be even less likely to conform to international norms on human rights, he said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 4, 2014

Refugee camp seethes with anger — against the PA

AVI ISSACHAROFF
NABLUS

Another winter in the Balata refugee camp. And as the years go by, nothing here changes for the better. The same poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and poverty.

Dozens of people fill the streets. Overwhelming youth unemployment rates – 56 per cent, according to Palestinian Authority statistics – explain why there are so many people idly wandering the alleyways.

The largest and one of most notorious of the camps, central to the anti-Israel violence and terrorism of the first and second intifadahs, Balata sits only a few kilometres from the heart of Nablus. But the gap between the camp's 30,000 residents and the city's has never been greater.

Every time I've been here in the last 14 years, I have heard harsh statements against Israel, against the occupation. But this time, most of the complaints are directed against the Palestinian Authority and its head, Mahmoud Abbas.

Ahmed, 30, points at the vegetable merchant who has set up shop across from his store. "You see the crates of vegetables?" he asks. "They have been sitting there for two days. He leaves them like that at night, and sells what is left during the day. These are not vegetables that are fit for humans, and still, people don't have money to buy anything else. No one here has a permit to work in Israel, and the PA isn't helping us. Try to get a bank loan. They won't give them to camp residents."

His friend Samir joins our conversation. "There is no police, and there is no law. People walk around with pistols because they fear for themselves, not because of the Israelis. I ask, what happens to the outside financial help the PA is receiving? Why doesn't it give any to the camp residents? Why doesn't it invest in them? If things stay like this, if the PA continues to ignore us, the situation will ultimately lead to an explosion."

Everyone here is talking about a conspiracy, *muwamra* in Arabic: a joint Israeli-PA conspiracy to weaken the camps.

Alaa, 43, says that the camp is supposed to be run by UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. "But they have scaled back their activities in the camp drastically. They are helping the residents less, and we feel it. But the PA refuses to invest here, because they claim it is the responsibility of UNRWA and the UN. So we get screwed. We have been abandoned. The PA supports the residents of the cities and villages. But it ignores us."

The tension and the sense of injustice are not new. Over decades, the residents here have developed a unique, separate sense of identity – as the most disadvantaged and oppressed members of Palestinian society. But whereas, in the past, it was Israel that oppressed them, now it is the PA.

Mahmoud Abu Jima says the situation has never been this bad. "This is no way to live; death is better. I promise you that if you give people here a salary of 3,000 shekels a month (about US $780), no one will make trouble. But look at what is happening now as a result of our abandonment by the PA. Every kind of drug you've ever heard of can be found here: hydra, ecstasy, cocaine, hashish. Whatever anyone offers the youth, they'll take."

Something minor happened here recently that underlined how tense the relationship is between Balata residents and the PA. A camp resident kidnapped a Palestinian from nearby Kfar Kalil over a monetary dispute. The kidnap victim was held for a few hours, and the PA security services learned about it in real time.

In order to avoid a PA police raid that would inevitably lead to violence, one of the Fatah heads in the camp, Jamal Tirawi, got involved. Tirawi is a parliamentarian who was freed from an Israeli prison 18 months ago after a six-year term (convicted as an accomplice in a 2002 suicide attack, in which the bomber left from his home to blow up Tel Aviv's Bialik Café, killing Rachel Tcherkhi and injuring 29 others). He arrived at the kidnapper's house and reached an agreement with him. The victim was returned safely to his family.

But the PA governor of Nablus, Ikhram Rajoub, would not let the incident end there. He decided that the security services must arrest the kidnapper.

"I tried to convince the governor not to do this," Jamal Tirawi said in his office in Nablus. "But he insisted."

Predictably, the entrance of police into the camp led to violent clashes with the residents, including massive stone-throwing at the Palestinian officers.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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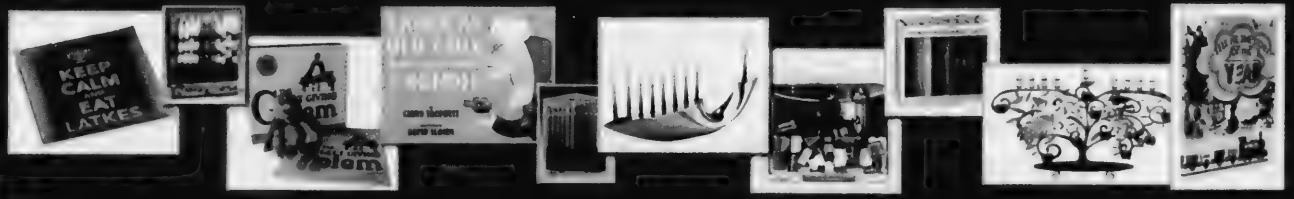

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Refugee camps caught between the UN and the PA

Young children in the Balata refugee camp. FLASH 90 PHOTO

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"The situation in the camps is especially bad," Tirawi explained. "UNRWA's activities in the Palestinian territories have been cut back by 80 per cent. In addition, the [PA] government doesn't take care of the camp's residents. We do not feature in the plans of the government or of the municipalities. Why? That's a political question: Who will take care of the camps, the PA government or the UN? The donor nations give money to the government, but it doesn't take care of the camps, and we suffer the consequences."

It is no secret that Tirawi is seen as a rival figure to the Fatah mainstream, and perhaps to Abbas himself. He, of course, denies it. "I am not an opposition to Abbas or Fatah. I am part of the movement. I accept and respect its leadership and its legitimacy. He is our leader. We love the *rais* (president) and we are his soldiers. I help connect between him and the refugee camps, and I want him to lead the Palestinian public. I personally co-ordinated a meeting of all the representatives of the camps who passed their demands on to Abbas. I am only trying to improve the relationship between those in charge and the citizens.

"Mistakes were made in the past, mainly on the executive level, and we want the PA and the public to be together, in the same place, so that we will not see what happened in Gaza repeat itself," Tirawi emphasized, referring to the violent June 2007 Hamas takeover of the Strip. "But if someone wants to paint me as the opposition, go right ahead."

So what happened with the Palestinian police? Why were they attacked in the camp?

"I said it in the past and I'll say it again: We need to improve the relationship between the security forces and the citizens. Especially in the camps," said Tirawi. "The security services are supposed to serve us, the civilians, and therefore we need to establish better relations."

I ask if he understands that for the average Israeli, the perpetuation of the refugee problem and the demand for a "right of return" for potentially millions of Palestinians to Israel are proof that there won't be peace here.

"The refugee issue is part of the broader solution between Israel and the Palestinians," Tirawi answered. Somewhat surprisingly, he didn't recite the familiar slogans about returning to Jaffa and Ramle, Haifa and Lod. Rather, he asserted, "The issue of return became an excuse for Israel not to reach a peace deal. If we reach a two-state solution based on the 1967 lines, I am telling you, the right of return will not prevent the agreement. This will not be a reason for a peace deal's failure. For now, the negotiations between Israel and the PA are a joke. But if we reach the situation of a historic solution to the problem and not a situation of managing the conflict, the right of return will not be a barrier. This is the position of many here," he asserted.

Still, he concluded, "if you expect me to give up on this right before the negotiations, you are mistaken." ■

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Ramat Givat Zeev: Planning of Country Club Complete

The upscale Ramat Givat Zeev neighborhood continues to set new standards of quality of living: The planning has now been completed for the neighborhood's country club, which will serve the residents and provide them with a quality space for shopping, recreation and leisure.

The project is being handled by the Perlmutter architectural firm, and the country club will be one of the most magnificent in the country. It will include a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, exercise rooms and a squash court. It will offer various clubs and groups to provide activities for children.

The country club is only one of numerous modern community facilities that will be part of the unique quality of life that will be offered at Ramat Givat Zeev.

CHANUKAH FOOD & GIFTS

Tasty dishes can start with prepared frozen foods

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

True confession: I have never made potato latkes. I should qualify that. I have often made latkes from package mixes, but never from scratch. It's not that I don't like home-made latkes. My mother made the most amazing latkes. But I could never be bothered to make them, because it was too much work. They're too high on the patchke-level scale for me.

I do often make the kosher frozen latkes and, of course, at Chanukah I make them almost every night as a way to mark the holiday.

I don't make blintzes from scratch either. I stock up on the kosher frozen variety when they go on sale, and if I don't have a meal planned for supper, I will often serve cheese blintzes.

I have two great-tasting, low-patchke recipes that would be ideal for a Chanukah brunch or dairy potluck. Both recipes start with prepared frozen dishes.

At the end of Yom Kippur, my sister, Sherri Wolfish, makes cheese blintz souffle (her recipe can be found in the Kinnereth cookbook) for breaking the fast, and it's always a hit. She starts with 3 packages (13 oz. each) of frozen blintzes and varies the flavours. She uses one box of cheese blintzes and two fruit flavours. "It could be cherry, blueberries or apple," she said. "It depends on what you like or what's on sale."

The other recipe is a simple variation of *shakshuka*, an Israeli recipe of eggs baked in tomato sauce.

In Israel, *shakshuka* is served with pita or challah. At Chanukah, I serve it on baked frozen potato latkes, but of course, homemade can also be substituted.

I don't make my tomato sauce from scratch either. I add some diced green or red pepper and some seasonings to prepared, store-bought sauce. Home-made sauce can certainly be used instead. This recipe is low on the patchke level, but high on taste.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

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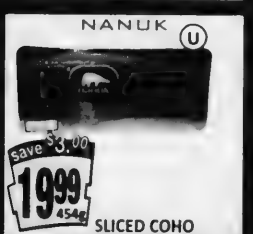

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

Blintz Souffle

- ❑ 3 13-oz. packages of frozen kosher blintzes (cherry, blueberry and /or cheese)
- ❑ 5 tbsp. butter
- ❑ 6 eggs
- ❑ 2 1/4 cups sour cream
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1 1/2 tbsp. orange juice
- ❑ 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350. Melt butter in a 9x13-inch baking dish. Spread frozen blintzes in bottom of pan. In a blender or mixer, combine eggs, sour cream, vanilla, orange juice, sugar and salt. Blend well. Pour sour cream mixture over blintzes. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake 1 hour. Serve hot from the oven. Makes 9 to 10 servings.

Latke Baked Eggs

- ❑ 4 cups tomato sauce
- ❑ 1 red or green pepper diced
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. paprika
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. cumin
- ❑ 8 eggs
- ❑ 1 package of frozen kosher potato latkes or home-made or store-bought latkes 3 to 4 in. in diameter
- chopped cilantro for garnish (optional)
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400. Lightly grease 2 oven-safe, shallow 8x8-in. baking dishes. Cover 1 large baking pan covered with parchment paper.

Heat tomato sauce in a saucepan on medium-low. Add diced peppers, cumin and paprika and simmer for 10 minutes. While sauce is heating, place latkes on greased parchment-lined baking sheet. When sauce is ready, remove from heat and divide it evenly between the two baking dishes. Make 4 wells in the sauce and gently crack an egg into each well. Repeat for the second pan and then place both pans in preheated oven on the higher rack.

Bake frozen latkes at the same time on the lower rack. Cook eggs seven to 10 minutes depending on desired hardness of yolk. The whites should be cooked through.

Cook latkes according to package instructions and remove from oven when done. Cover with foil to keep them warm if eggs are not ready.

To assemble, place 1 egg on each latke. Cover with sauce and garnish with cilantro if desired. Makes 8 servings. ■

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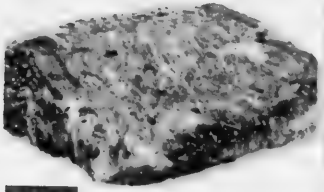

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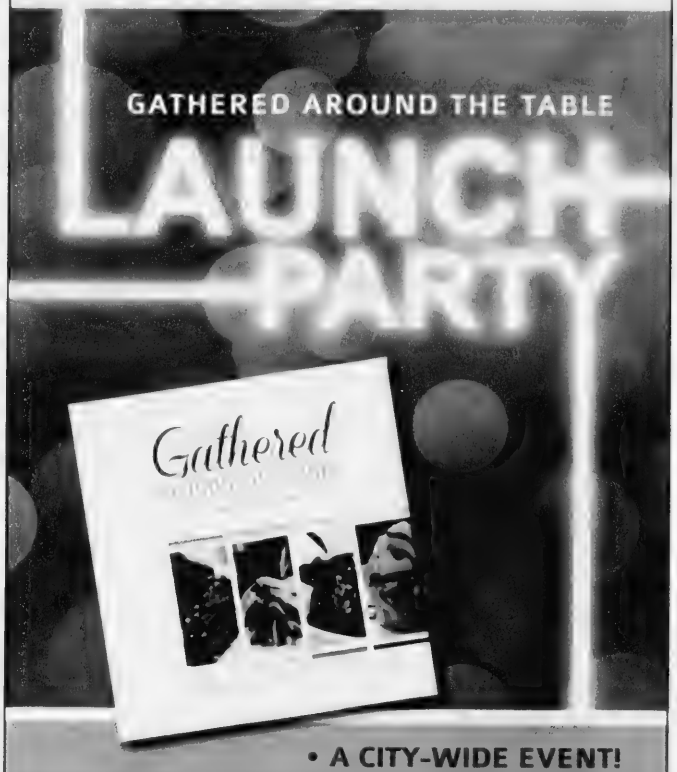

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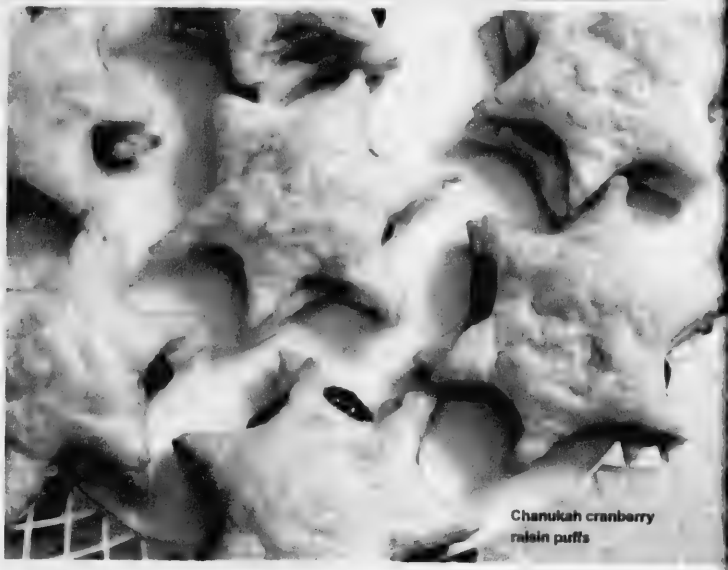

Chanukah cranberry raisin puffs

Chanukah is family time

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Chanukah should not be a time to stress about labouring in the kitchen. You should not have to exclude yourself so that you don't get to enjoy the holiday. The art in balancing tradition with memorable food and festivities is planning and preparing for the holiday in advance.

Plan your menu, get your shopping done and don't forget the chocolate Chanukah gelt, candles, dreidels and perhaps a few decorations. Prepare whatever can be cooked or baked in advance and prep whatever you wish to make immediately before your celebration.

When you invite guests for Chanukah you want them to be relaxed and contented, and your guests won't feel calm if you don't. So break the "stuck in the kitchen" attitude and with approach the holiday with a little strategy and some organization to make this the best family Chanukah ever!

Mandelbrot Chicken

- 9 chicken breasts, cut in half horizontally
- 1 cup almonds
- 2 cups mandelbrot crumbs, about 20 pieces of mandelbrot (1/3-1/2-in. thick)
- 2 cups panko crumbs
- 2 cups almond milk
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

Prepare mandelbrot crumbs by tossing cookies into a food processor and pulsing until medium-fine. Remove crumbs to a bowl and process almonds until medium-fine. Mix crumbs, almonds and panko crumbs.

Prepare baking sheets covered in foil and sprayed well with Canola oil cooking spray.

Prepare three bowls, the first with 2 cups almond milk, the second with the flour mixed with the salt and pepper and the third with some of the crumbs mixture. Reserve the remaining crumbs and add to bowl as needed. This is to keep the crumbs dry as you are using them. Take a piece of chicken and soak it in the almond milk, then the flour. Dunk it again into the almond milk and then into the Panko and cookie crumb mixture. Pat crumbs down evenly over the chicken*. Place each piece of prepared chicken onto the baking sheet, about one inch apart. Bake at 350 for about 40 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and golden in colour.

*The chicken can be frozen at this point. Place chicken on parchment covered baking sheets and cover with plastic wrap. Place in freezer until frozen and then transfer chicken to parchment lined plastic containers, or large Ziploc baggies and return to freezer. Allow extra time when baking the frozen chicken to defrost.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Chanukah Cranberry Raisin Puffs

- ❑ 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- ❑ 3/4 cup raisins
- ❑ 1 cup dry sherry
- ❑ 1/4 cup sugar
- ❑ 2 boxes frozen puff pastry, defrosted (500 g)
- ❑ 1 egg, beaten
- ❑ Chanukah cookie cutter(s)

Prepare two baking sheets with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 375. Place cranberries, raisins, sherry and sugar in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil and stir occasionally. Cook until most of the liquid has boiled out and the mixture is sticky. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Unroll the first package of pastry, and using cookie cutters, cut out the desired shapes. Place each cut-out shape on the parchment paper about two inches apart. Place a heaping teaspoon full of the fruit mixture in the centre of the shape. Unroll the remaining puff pastry and cut out the same shapes to use as the top of each puff. Carefully place the top cut-out over the filling trying to match it to the bottom. Brush each one with the beaten egg. Bake for 20 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown and puffed.

Double The Potato Latkes

- ❑ 2 medium large potatoes
- ❑ 2 tbsp. margarine
- ❑ 6 medium large potatoes to equal approximately 6 cups shredded potatoes
- ❑ 1 large onion, diced finely
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1/4 cup panko crumbs
- ❑ 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- ❑ 2 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- ❑ 1/4 cup canola oil, plus more as needed

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Wash the two potatoes and remove eyes and blemishes. Cook potatoes in boiling water until fork tender. About 15 minutes. Mash with a potato masher or ricer adding in margarine when mashed. Chill.

Wash the remaining potatoes and remove eyes and blemishes. Shred the potatoes with a food processor or by hand with a box grater and immediately rinse them in well under cold water. This step ensures that the potatoes will not turn black. Squeeze out all the water and place shredded potatoes into a large bowl. Add in the cooled mashed potatoes, onion, eggs, crumbs, salt, baking powder and pepper.

Heat canola oil in a frying pan. It is ready when a piece of shredded potato dropped into the pan sizzles. Using a 1/3 cup measure, drop the mixture into the pan, pressing lightly to flatten. Keep latkes at least two inches apart. Cook until golden brown, about 3-4 minutes per side. Drain on layers of paper towels. Continue with remaining batter adding additional oil if required.

Latkes can be transferred onto a foil-lined baking sheet and placed in a 250-degree oven to keep warm until needed. Latkes can be refrigerated or frozen at this point and reheated. Preparing the latkes in advance is a great way to make sure that the latkes will be served extra crispy. ■

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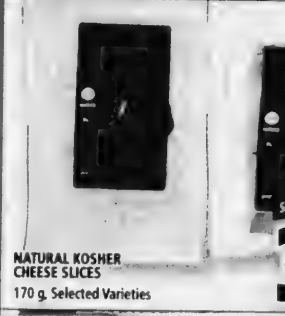

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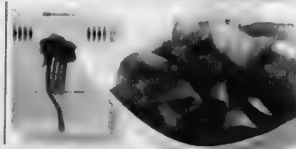

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Mount Sinai baby registry a Chanukah gift idea

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

With Chanukah around the corner, there's a great gift available for your friends and loved ones.

But it's not the latest gadget, newest product or fashionable clothing.

It's a gift that could help save lives down the road.

Mount Sinai Hospital is opening a new women's and infants' program and has created a baby registry that is set up to take in donations.

"We're in the final phases of completing these two centrepiece floors and we're very excited to be opening [them] in February," said Kevin Goldthorp, president of the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation.

"Obviously, it's a major capital investment by the hospital through the Government of Ontario and our donor community.

"As we go through the final few months of figuring it out and getting ready to go, we still have money to raise for the equipment."

The donations are being taken in for their labour and delivery unit, the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and the antenatal unit.

"Our objective is to provide state-of-the-art [facilities] from top to bottom," Goldthorp said. "We have a stunning new facility that's going to be very welcomed by our patients and our families.

"If you have a high-risk baby born prematurely and she's in the neonatal care unit in the NICU, then we're going to be giving you the best and most up-to-date NICU unit in North America."

Goldthorp sees the donation as an ideal present idea with the season at hand.

"Rather than giving Chanukah gelt, you can tell someone that you made gifts to Mount Sinai and purchased them part of a new ventilator, a new bed, you name it," he said.

"You can go online and buy the entire good or buy a share of it, and then we acknowledge it and send an acknowledgement card to the person being honoured, or on behalf of whom the gift is being given."

Any level of donation will receive an official tax receipt, along with a commemorative Mount Sinai baby blanket and personalized thank you letter from the foundation.

"We'd like people to go online and look, and then they can see what precisely we're trying to buy and how many of [each item]," Goldthorp said. "Maybe you can't afford the $12,000 to buy a defibrillator, but you can give $50 or $100 towards it.

"This allows people to see what they're doing and how they're helping, and can do so at whatever level of gift they can afford."

People can also purchase a gift card for multiple denominations as a present, and when that happens, the money will then be used by Mount Sinai towards whatever is the most current and pressing item required for their new facility.

Goldthorp believes there is a deeper Jewish meaning in giving this kind of a present.

"For one, in an era when so many have so much, rather than giving an item that may or may not be used, this allows you to do a wonderful act of tzedakah to show that you've thought of a person," he said. "It's also part of the whole concept of tikun olam, where you're recognizing that you're giving to help others and healing the world.

"It's a beautiful concept to use that holiday to help others."

You can find the complete list and donation possibilities online at sinaibabyregistry.ca.

"It's exciting and it's a new way of trying to tangibly show our community what the hospital needs and what is required for new babies and new mothers," Goldthorp said. "It's an exciting new venture and we look forward to see how our community responds." ■

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Join us on Sunday, December 7, 2014, at 1 p.m. at Fruit of the Land Culinary Market in Promenade Mall for meet & greet with well-known cookbook author Estee Kalra!

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EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's Chanukah cookie time, the time of year when only the tastiest and most beautiful cookies you can make are served to everyone who comes to share the lighting of your menorah. They are the gift you give to friends and family with love, the tray you slide to the front of the dessert table and the ones you hide in the back of the freezer so that your family won't eat them before the company comes.

Hazelnut Truffle Cookies

Hazelnut cookies filled with a chocolate truffle filling and drizzled with a chocolate glaze.

- ❑ 1 1/4 cup shelled hazelnuts
- ❑ 2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 whole egg plus 1 yolk
- ❑ 2 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour, plus extra for work surface
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. baking powder

Truffle filling:

- ❑ 1 cup whipping cream
- ❑ 9 oz. milk chocolate, chopped
- ❑ 5 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped
- ❑ 8 oz. semisweet chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350. Roast hazelnuts on baking sheet 10 to 12 minutes until golden brown. Rub briskly while still warm in towel to remove skins. Place cooled nuts in food processor; process until finely ground and set aside.

In bowl of electric mixer, beat butter, sugar and salt until light and fluffy. Beat in egg, yolk, and vanilla; add nuts and mix until blended. Combine flour and baking powder; add to nut mixture, beating on low speed until just mixed. Divide dough in half, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375. Using 1/2 of a disc of dough, lightly flour work surface and roll dough to 1/8-in. thick. Cut dough into shapes using small cookie cutters. Place 1/2-in. apart on parchment lined or ungreased baking sheet. Bake until edges are golden, and cookies are set, about 7-8 minutes. Cool on sheet for 1 minute, and then transfer cookies to wire rack to cool completely. Repeat process with remaining dough.

To make filling, heat cream in small heavy sauce pan over medium heat to just boiling. Pour over chocolate in mixing bowl, (not plastic). Stir vigorously until chocolate is melted and smooth. Chill uncovered in refrigerator for 40 minutes, beating occasionally until ganache thickens and is spreadable. Spread filling 1/8-in. thick on flat side of cookie and place another cookie on top, sandwich style. If ganache thickens too much before you finish, just set bowl in a larger bowl of hot water and stir. Decorate cookies by melting semisweet chocolate and piping it back and forth across tops of cookies. Place sheets of cookies in freezer for 10 minutes until chocolate is set. Makes 3 to 3 1/2 dozen cookies. Note: These cookies will keep at room temperature for up to 3 days, 5-7 days in fridge, or 3 months in freezer. ■

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Culinary masterpieces of Jewish grandmothers

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish Soul Food, published in October by Schocken Books, is devoted to the culinary masterpieces of Jewish grandmothers from Minsk to Marrakesh. Author Janna Gur serves up unforgettable dishes for today's kitchen with recipes that have travelled across continents and cultural borders.

Gur, who lives in Tel Aviv, was in Toronto Nov. 12 for The Bonnie Stern Book Club, and spoke to *The CJN* about her newest book.

Gur had decided to confine herself to 100 dishes in *Jewish Soul Food*, representing as many Jewish communities as possible. "It's a kind of greatest hits from our Jewish grandmothers," she said.

"In selecting the dishes, I tried to crack the code of a winning dish. What is it that makes us adopt and adapt a certain recipe, but abandon another? There's the relative ease of preparation and the availability of ingredients, but there's something else as well: the 'soul' of a dish. To discover that soul was my goal," she said.

There are more than 100 original, wide-ranging recipes in *Jewish Soul Food*. Kubaneh, a surprising Yemenite version of a brioche, and Ushpa-lau, a hearty Bukharan pilaf, were chosen not by an editor or a chef, but rather by what Gur calls "natural selection."

These are dishes that, though rooted in their original Diaspora provenance, have been embraced by Israelis and have become part of the country's culinary landscape. The premise of *Jewish Soul Food* is that the only way to preserve traditional cuisine for future generations is to cook it, she said.

"In 1974, our family emigrated from Riga to Israel. Connecting to Israeli food was easy – I was quickly seduced by the fresh, spiced tastes of local cooking and dizzying abundances of fruits and vegetables."

In time, through a series of strange turns of fate, Gur became a food writer and, in 1991, together with her husband, founded *Al Hashulchan*, a Hebrew-language food magazine, which she edits to this day.

In 2008, Gur authored her first cookbook, *The Book of New Israeli Food*, a collection of recipes and stories celebrating Israeli food and the people who create it.

"Israeli cooking draws its inspiration from two major sources: the Middle Eastern cuisines of the countries that surround us and the culinary legacy brought to Israel by Jewish immigrants," she said.

"The fact that Israel is home to so many communities coming from such far and diverse places – and the interaction between these diverse peoples – is what makes Israeli food so unique. Moroccan, Iraqi, Yemeni, Turkish and Bulgarian dishes have passed into the culinary mainstream and have all become Israeli favourites."

Gur realized her *aha!* moment when she found herself not only looking at food recipes and trends, but making the connection to memories surrounding food and preserving Jewish food culture.

"I was so involved in celebrating our brave new culinary world that I regarded Jewish cuisines as a means to an end," she said.

Then she started to look with fresh eyes and embarked on a new journey, one that looks back rather than forward.

"The world of culinary wisdom faced dramatic changes in the 20th century as the vast majority of those scattered in the Jewish Diaspora ceased (or nearly ceased) to exist in their original provenances," she said.

"In the early days of the Zionist movement, there was an overwhelming impulse to reject the Diaspora – its customs, its language, its foods. Parents clung tenaciously to their culinary legacy as a way to preserve their identities – to connect with their families, to remember their homes.

"Today, more and more Israelis are aware of the importance of preserving their family cooking heritages," she said.

Jewish Soul Food is divided into sections encouraging the reader to explore dishes from various Jewish cuisines.

"I can also envision a different scenario, where the reader encounters a dish remembered from childhood and decides to make it in his or her own kitchen for the very first time.

"By cooking it and serving it to those you love, you help to keep it alive and pass it on to the next generation," Gur said.

Here are two recipes from *Jewish Soul Food* that Gur recommends for Chanukah.

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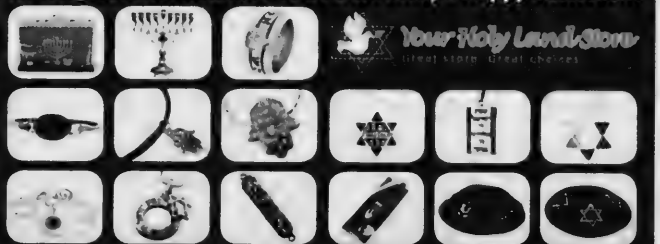

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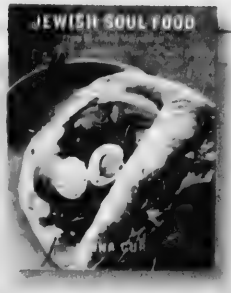

Bimuelos – Honey Hannukah Puffs

Gur describes Sephardi bimuelos as "small, crispy, drizzled with cinnamon-scented honey syrup and garnished with walnuts."

Dough:
- ❑ 1 tbsp. instant yeast
- ❑ 1/4 cup sugar
- ❑ 2 1/2 cups lukewarm water
- ❑ 3 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ vegetable oil for deep frying

Syrup:
- ❑ 3/4 cup of water
- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup honey
- ❑ 1 large cinnamon stick, broken into 3 pieces

To serve:
- ❑ 1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

Combine the yeast, sugar and lukewarm water in a large mixing bowl and let stand for 10 minutes, until foamy. Add the flour, eggs and salt and whisk to a smooth, sticky dough. Cover with plastic wrap or a wet towel and let stand for about 1 hour, until doubled in volume.

Meanwhile, prepare the syrup. Combine the water, sugar, honey and cinnamon in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Let cool.

Heat the vegetable oil for deep-frying in a large, wide saucepan. Pour some additional oil into a small bowl. Dip a tablespoon into the oil, take a spoonful of the dough, and slide the dough into the hot oil. Fry in batches, 6 to 7 puffs at a time, so as not to bring down the oil temperature, 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to absorb excess oil.

Arrange the warm puffs on a serving plate, drizzle with the syrup and sprinkle with the walnuts. Serve at once. Makes 40 puffs

Ijeh B'lahmeh

"Ijeh is a wonderful alternative to the traditional Chanukah latkes with a big plus: unlike potato latkes, ijeh can be made in advance and served at room temperature."

Pancakes:
- ❑ 4 eggs
- ❑ 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- ❑ about 2 tbsp. matzah meal or bread crumbs
- ❑ 1 bunch fresh parsley
- ❑ 1 bunch fresh cilantro
- ❑ 1/2 bunch fresh mint
- ❑ 3 to 4 scallions (white and green parts)
- ❑ 10 oz. (300 g) ground beef, or a lamb and beef mixture
- ❑ salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 2 to 3 tbsp. pine nuts (optional)
- ❑ vegetable oil for frying

To serve (optional):
- ❑ pita, bread rolls or ciabatta
- ❑ olive oil
- ❑ slices of red onion
- ❑ chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley
- ❑ or cilantro
- ❑ tomato slices
- ❑ tahini spread

Prepare the pancakes. Put the eggs, onion, matzah meal or bread crumbs, parsley, cilantro, mint and scallions in a food processor. Pulse until the herbs are chopped. Transfer to a bowl. Add the ground beef, salt, pepper and pine nuts (if using) and mix thoroughly.

Heat a little bit of vegetable oil in a large, nonstick frying pan. With a large spoon, ladle in pancakes 3 inches wide and fry over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until deep golden. Be careful not to crowd the pan (work in batches). Remove to paper towels to drain.

To serve, if desired, brush the pita with olive oil and toast in a hot pan or oven. Arrange the pancakes on the bread (it will absorb the flavourful juices) and top with red onion, herbs, tomato and tahini spread. If not serving at once, store the pancakes in the refrigerator – they are delicious cold or at room temperature in a sandwich or as a light snack. Makes 15-20 pancakes.

Variation: For a vegetarian version, skip the meat and increase the amount of matzah meal or bread crumbs to 5 tablespoons. You might also want to add 1 to 2 chopped and slowly sautéed onions for extra flavour. ■

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Young entrepreneur finds success in toy land

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Former Winnipegger Ilana Ben Ari has followed a meandering path to success as a social entrepreneur.

Since leaving Winnipeg in 2001, her life's journey has taken her to Montreal, London and Helsinki en route to settling in Toronto where she has opened up shop as the creator and designer of a new line of toys that is intended to teach 21st-century skills such as empathy, creativity, dealing with failure, and collaboration.

Over the past two years, Ben Ari and her company, Twenty One Toys, has garnered a large amount of publicity worldwide – including a write-up in *Time* magazine – as the creator of one of six new technologies that "will shape the classrooms of the future."

"We received three awards in just one week," she says.

She reports that her most recent honour was to be named an Ariane De Rothschild Fellow – one of only two from Canada – in July. As such, she was invited to join the other fellows from all over North America and Europe to study at Cambridge University for two weeks in August.

"Our toys are in over 500 homes, schools (including the Gray Academy and St. John's High School in Winnipeg) and offices in 31 countries, and we still have a ways to go," she says.

She adds that the newly opened Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg is planning on carrying the Empathy Toy in its boutique.

A graduate of Talmud Torah and the Gray Academy, Ben Ari says that she has always been creative in a practical way. That led her into a career in industrial design.

"I had never heard of industrial design when I was in high school," she says, "but I have an uncle in London who is an industrial designer. He suggested that I might be interested in a career in this field. So I looked into it."

After high school, she enrolled in an industrial design program at Carleton University in Ottawa. It was a five-year program with a year off in fourth year for work experience. During that time she worked in Winnipeg for Plastic Buddha, an industrial design firm that designed coffee tables for Palliser Furniture.

"Craig Alun Smith, founder of Plastic Buddha was named by *Wallpaper* magazine as one of their Top Ten Young Designers Worldwide," she says.

After graduation, she first worked for Montreal-based lighting company Bazz Lighting which, she says, provides affordable lighting for merchandisers such as Rona and Home Depot stores – and later, Axis Lighting whose higher-end products light office buildings and airport terminals.

While the company she was working for was growing successfully, she says she was becoming frustrated in her work. "What I really wanted to do was become involved in a social enterprise business," she says. "But I didn't know where to start."

She quit her job in Montreal and, with a grant, had a year in which to explore her options. During that time, she attended

> *Our toys are in over 500 homes, schools and offices in 31 countries*

some business classes. For her new product, she turned to a toy she had developed for her course at Carleton and for which she had won an award.

Connexions, she explains, is an empathy toy, a three-dimensional, wooden puzzle intended for two kids to play blindfolded. One of the students is presented with a prearranged puzzle and the goal is for them to explain to their partner how to replicate the model.

After her year of research, she went to England where she worked for a time for a socially responsive design company. Following that, she was accepted into a business accelerator program in Helsinki, where she was able to explore social entrepreneurship.

"I learned a lot about toy design and marketing," she says.

In 2012, she founded Twenty One Toys in Toronto, and is currently operating out of the Centre for Social Innovation, a co-working space, community, and launch pad for people who are changing the world for the better. The emphasis is on social innovation.

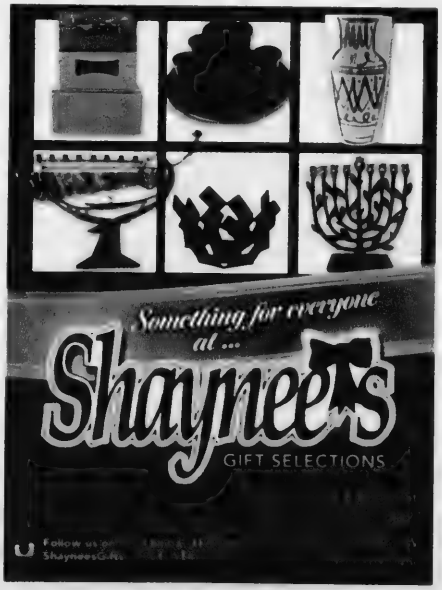
Ben Ari's younger sister, Timna, is the executive assistant at the centre.

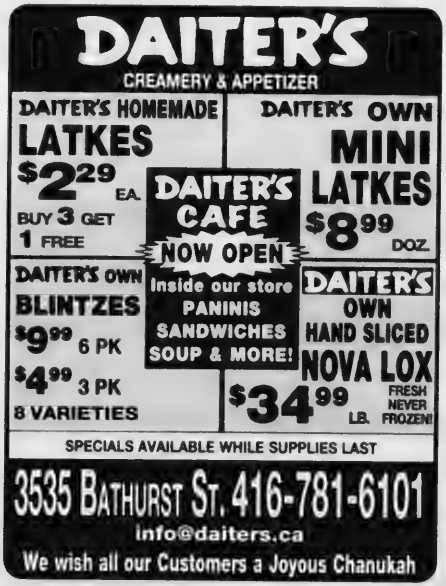
Ben-Ari notes that her toy company is "dedicated to teaching creativity, collaborative learning, innovation and problem solving". The Empathy Toy is designed to help kids develop empathy and creativity. It also comes with a 90-page guidebook that offers points of discussion on how empathy relates to a number of larger topics, like teamwork and leadership.

Her first major order, she says, was for 30 sets for the Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board in 2012. "As a result of that sale," she says, "we felt that we should focus our messaging on the K-12 education market. That order also permitted us to hire an in-house educator to frame the value of the toy in teacher-speak, and an amazing web designer to help spread that message to the world. "Late last year," she says, "we managed to sell pre-orders of the Empathy Toy to educators in 31countries through a successful Kickstarter campaign. We raised over $53,000 through pre-orders to start production on 1,000 Empathy Toy sets.

"We are almost sold out. The money we raised has been invested in mass- production, which will dramatically reduce the cost of the toys, and has presented another set of challenges to solve – but that's what makes my work so rewarding."

Ben Ari reports that her company's next product is a toy that teaches failure. "We are also developing an at-home version of the Empathy Toy because we found that many teachers were taking the toys home to play with their spouses and children," she says. ■





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Jewish Life

Doc follows musicians wrestling with Jewish identity

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Tamas Wormser was a boy growing up in Budapest, his father took him to the Dohany Street synagogue, the largest shul in Europe. Even though he grew up in a family without much connection to the Jewish religion or culture, Wormser says the cantor's singing enthralled him.

"I never, ever heard anything like that," Wormser says "Music has the power of going straight to your heart. That was the first thing that connected me to something unknown."

How fitting that one of the biggest projects in the filmmaker's career is an exploration of Jewish music around the world. Wormser, who now lives in Montreal, spent the last seven-and-a-half years flying to Jewish communities around the world, to places as distant as Mali and Uganda.

In *The Wandering Muse*, which opens at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto on Dec. 5, Wormser focuses on 11 musicians wrestling with their Jewish identity. This tribe of artists is diverse, with musical stylings ranging from traditional klezmer to blues and hip-hop.

The subject of Wormser's film is: what is a Jew? Since music is such a strong part of Jewish identity, the director says the art form is a great way to communicate the multiplicity of Jews around the world.

"I thought the best and the most fun way to present that [identity] is through music," Wormser says. "It transcends time and it carries the soul."

The featured musicians have varying political and religious beliefs, yet music helps to bring each one closer to his or her faith.

In Tangiers, musician Vanessa Paloma sings tunes written by Sephardi women passed down from the times of the Spanish Inquisition. In Berlin, musicians Daniel Kahn and Psoy Korolenko perform protest songs from czarist Russia and Nazi Germany in their sets. In New York, Basya Schechter looks for musical inspiration from around the world as she studies to be a cantor.

In one of the film's most fascinating sections, Wormser visits Putti, a village in Uganda where the citizens sing about Jerusalem and the chosen people. Putti's inhabitants, the Abayudaya people, chant prayers in Hebrew and hope to connect with Israel.

The community is currently looking to convert to Orthodox Judaism. Wormser tells *The CJN* he is thinking of making a film about the Abayudaya people.

The Wandering Muse also focuses on a sad reality for many Jewish musicians: there are few cultural bodies around to support them.

Wormser says the audience for *The Wandering Muse* is not just Jewish.

"[The film] breaks the stereotypes," he says. "Many people have a very definite opinion of what or who is a Jew. What it means to me could be the opposite of what it means to you."

The documentary only cracks the surface of what Wormser discovered in his journey, he says. This month, a website, the Wandering Muse Jewish Music Network, will be launched with the goal of bringing together Jewish musicians from around the world. The site intends to be a platform for the public and Jewish musicians to connect, and will showcase more than 250 original video clips.

The Abayudaya people from a village in Uganda chant Jewish prayers, top, and Basya Schechter lives in Brooklyn and shares her story of musical transcendence in the new documentary *The Wandering Muse*.

Some of the original footage that will appear on the site – some 10 hours worth of material – comes from artists in the film, as well as the Jewish music scenes Wormser discovered in places such as Argentina, Yemen, Cuba and Afghanistan. New Jewish artists can join the network with their songs, stories and video content.

One of the featured musicians in the film is Canadian, Montreal's Josh Dolgin, who goes by the stage name Socalled. Dolgin got into klezmer music when he was looking for samples to use in hip-hop songs and came upon a collection of Yiddish records. Today, he mixes hip-hop and klezmer during his live shows, syncing prayer with a party vibe.

Wormser also filmed some of the documentary in Canada, at performances from the Montreal International Jazz Festival and the Ashkenaz Festival in Toronto. (Ashkenaz will present *The Wandering Muse* screenings in Toronto).

Very little of *The Wandering Muse* was filmed in Israel. This is appropriate for a film about Jews in the Diaspora, searching for their spiritual centre – a group that Wormser counts himself among.

"I've always had a strong identity but it was not related to religion or culture," he says. "I guess I have a sort of outsider point-of-view. I feel like I belong to this archetype of the wandering artist somehow." ■

The Wandering Muse plays until Dec. 9 at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto.

Producer wants film to make people feel good

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ariana Berlin's lucky number is 24. That was the date of the Saturday in November 2001 when she went shopping with her mother, Susan, in Orange County, California. During their day out, a car collided with Susan's car, sending it airborne.

The car flipped onto the driver side. Ariana's body hung out of the window with a seat belt wrapped around her neck before her body was recovered. Four days later, the 13-year-old woke up from an induced coma with two collapsed lungs, two broken legs and cracked ribs. Susan also survived, although with minor brain trauma and a broken tibia.

When Berlin told Jeff Deverett, a film producer and Toronto native, about her lucky number, he says he was astonished. "I said, 'You almost died. Why would that be your lucky number?'" Deverett says.

"And she said, 'Because I lived.'

"To me, that kind of stuff is so inspirational. That you can take a moment like that – that could be the worst day of your life – and put a positive spin on it as the best day of your life. That's the day she lived, not died."

Deverett, a fan of inspirational sports dramas, instantly gravitated toward Berlin's story. The Jewish gymnast had been an Olympic hopeful who had to put her dreams on hold as she recovered from her debilitating injury.

After hearing her story, Deverett knew he had found the right material for his next film, *Full Out*, based on Berlin's inspiring story, is slated for release in late 2015, hoping to build excitement for the Summer Olympics the following year.

Full Out explores Berlin's ascent from what could have been a spirit-crushing incident to winning an NCAA championship as part of the UCLA gymnastics squad.

It took Berlin about a year of recovery until she could do any kind of physical activity. When she tried to go back to gymnastics, the searing pain prevented her from moving from the trampoline to the floor. It wasn't until 2007 that she could try again, after a rod was removed from her leg.

Instead, Berlin moved toward dancing, which she says she had always had a passion for. She began doing hip-hop dancing for Culture Shock, a professional troupe from her hometown of San Diego. With that group, Berlin worked on a show at SeaWorld. The choreographer was Valorie Kondos-Field, the head coach of gymnastics at UCLA.

"That's the only school I had ever wanted to go to and the only coach I ever wanted to be coached by," Berlin told *The CJN*. "The last day of rehearsal [at Sea World], I went up to her and said, 'I would go back to gymnastics tomorrow if I could be a part of your team.'"

Kondos-Field offered Berlin a spot despite her injury, as she knew of the aspiring gymnast's gutsy determination. In *Full Out*, an actor best known for portraying a dancer plays the coach: Jennifer Beals of *Flashdance* fame.

Executive producer Jeff Deverett (left) stands with ex-UCLA gymnast Ariana Berlin. Berlin's story of adversity inspired the sports drama Full Out, which recently wrapped filming in Toronto. JORDAN ADLER PHOTO

Degrassi's Ana Golja plays the aspiring gymnast in the film and even enrolled in gymnastics classes to get into shape. Berlin says she instantly clicked with Golja and taught the young actor the floor routine she performed in the climactic competition.

However, when it came time to cast Golja's stunt double for the more difficult routines, the choice was clear. Berlin donned her old UCLA outfit and took the job herself, even though she hadn't done gymnastics competitively for thee years.

"I hired one of the assistant coaches at UCLA for a month and a half prior to shooting," Berlin says. "For gymnastics, if you take off a week, it's equivalent to a month. [It felt like] it had been a lifetime."

To make sure the story remained as true as possible within a two-hour running time, Berlin and her whole family gave input to the film's screenplay. Deverett says he did not show the family a draft until scribe Willem Wennekers had gotten the story mostly right.

"It's very personal because we're talking about a traumatic event," Deverett says. "Her mother went through the car accident also. A lot of that is super sensitive. It's important to capture the truth and the sensitivity of that in the script." The $1.5-million film wrapped its shoot in the Greater Toronto Area in early November. Despite the modest budget, the size of the production matters little if the film has an enormous heart.

"I feel like the movie should share an experience with people that helps them grow in their lives and makes them feel good when they leave the theatre," Deverett says. "It's putting something out there that is positive for the world."

Deverett says he hopes *Full Out* will get a theatrical release, although he recognizes it will likely be a television movie. Perhaps if he wants it to be a hit, though, he should make sure the film airs on the 24th. ■

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All entries received by 3 p.m. on **Monday, December 15** are eligible The winning entries will be randomly selected at The CJN offices on **Tuesday, December 16**. The winners will be notified the same day Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. One entry per person

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Email your information to "contest@thecjn.ca" Re: **"DELIMAX" Contest**, or mail to: The Canadian Jewish News, 1750 Steeles Ave. W Suite 218, Concord, ON L4K 2L7 or fax to: 416-391 0949

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The Klezmatics expand the boundaries of music

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Klezmatics, considered the world's best-known klezmer band, will celebrate its 28th anniversary in concert at Flato Markham Theatre on Dec. 11.

Founded in 1986 in New York by original members Frank London, Paul Morissett and Lorin Sklamberg, the six-member troupe appeals to those appreciating the history, rhythms and sounds of klezmer music of east European Jewry from past centuries.

"When The Klezmantics was formed, all of us thought the band would supplement our incomes from teaching music and other occupations. I never thought that, almost 30 years later, my life mission has changed to preserve the musical legacy of our band and klezmer music," said Sklamberg, the lead vocalist who plays the accordion, guitar, piano and violin.

"Klezmer is the unique sound of east European Jewishness. It has the power to evoke a nostalgic feeling for a time and place we never knew," said London, the trumpet player.

Over the years, The Klezmatics have made a conscious effort to expand the boundaries of their music through collaborations and exploration of other musical genres.

The popularity of The Klezmatics continues to increase. CHUCK FISHMAN PHOTO

"Klezmer has to be intertwined with American culture. We want to make sure that The Klezmatics are part of a living tradition, and traditions change," said Morissett, who plays bass.

Two albums in particular have expanded the range and popularity of The Klezmatics. The 2004 CD *Brother Moses Smote The Water* was an exploration of gospel and jazz through a collaboration with gospel singer Joshua Nelson and jazz vocalist Kathryn Farmer.

The following year, a chance meeting with Nora Guthrie in concert led to The Klezmatics recording the lyrics of her father, folk music legend Woody Guthrie, in *Wonder Wheel*.

Wonder Wheel broadened the appeal of The Klezmatics by including the political leanings of Guthrie, who was influenced by the poetry of his Jewish mother-in-law. The album won the Grammy Award in 2006 for best world music album.

Songs such as *On Holy Ground* and *Come When I Call You* from the album had The Klezmatics singing in English, with the Guthrie lyrics calling for support of various social issues.

"It was so important to us to sing songs about issues we believe in, such as gay rights, recognition of Israel, peace in the Middle East and other issues," said Sklamberg, who is openly gay and lives with his husband and children in New York.

The popularity of The Klezmatics continues to increase, and they recently performed with classical violinist Itzhak Perlman and Israeli singer Chava Alberstein, and have appeared on late-night television with David Letterman and Conan O'Brien.

The Klezmatics have recorded 10 albums and have given concerts in more than 20 countries including Israel. Other band members are alto saxophone and clarinetist Matt Darrian, vocalist and violinist Lisa Gutkin and drummer Richie Barshay.

The Klezmatics perform in concert Dec. 11, 8 p.m. at Flato Markham Theatre, 101 Town Center Blvd. in Markham, Ont. For tickets, call 905-305-7469 or go to www.markhamtheatre.can.

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

FILM 'ADVANCED STYLE' CHALLENGES OUR NOTIONS OF BEAUTY AND AGING

Koffler Centre of the Arts presents two screenings of *Advanced Style*, a film based on a blog by **Ari Seth Cohen** that examines the lives of seven independent, stylish New York women aged 62 to 95 who are challenging conventional ideas about beauty, aging and the West's obsession with youth. $12, includes glass of wine and popcorn. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Thursday, Dec. 4, 7 and 9 p.m.

• • •

Toronto Jewish Film Society: In the powerful cinematic drama *Un Secret*, shocking family secrets are revealed as **Francois Grimbert** grows up in a troubled family after World War II. The Toronto Jewish Film Society selection is co-presented with Alliance Française de Toronto, with guest speaker, author **Bernice Eisenstein**. Tickets $15, $10, available before each screening. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Dec. 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• • •

Literature & Drama

• Koffler Centre of the Arts presents a staged reading of *Infinity*, a shocking, funny and revelatory new play by Tarragon playwright-in-residence **Hannah Moscovitch**. Free admission. Koffler Gallery, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m. kofflerarts.org

• **Helen Drazek**, a Holocaust "hidden child," has written an account of her family's experiences in the Holocaust, with the help of Toronto author **Anne Dublin**. *Odyssey through Hell: Escape from the Warsaw Ghetto* will soon be available at Indigo and Israel's Judaica Centre in Toronto and at Rodals in Montreal. For further details, please write to helen@docim.com

• The current issue of the Canadian literary journal *Malahat Review* presents 28 works in translation, including the late Yiddish author **Chava Rosenfarb**'s *In The Boxcar* as translated by her daughter, **Goldie Morgentaler**. Toronto writer **Kenneth Sherman** has also contributed translations of the poems *My Friend is Dying* by **Simcha Simchovitch** and *Four Questions* by **Leyzer Volf**.

• Columnist and former *Globe and Mail* books section editor **Martin Levin** has been named as a juror for the 2015 RBC Taylor Prize, handed out annually to the best works of literary non-fiction. Levin, originally from Winnipeg and now of Toronto, joins **Kevin Garland** and **Andrew Preston** on the jury.

• Soulpepper Theatre is preparing to mount a new adaptation of **S. Ansky**'s *The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds*, by award-winning Canadian playwright **Anton Piatigorsky**. The opening is slated for next May. This supernatural tale of powerful young love and spiritual possession is reputedly the most famous play in Yiddish literature.

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Musical Events

• Pianist **Fern Lindzon** plays accompaniment for the silent film *The Scarlet Letter* starring Lilian Gish. $15. The Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave. Sunday, Dec. 7, 4 p.m. 416-531-9950. Lindzon's Jazz Trio performs at The Old Mill Inn, Home Smith Bar, Thursday, Dec. 18, 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. $20 food-drink minimum. 416-236-2641.

• **Kevin Courrier** Spins the Beatles. Courrier's series of music lectures with film clips, continues with a segment on "Carry That Weight: Breaking Up and the Legacy That Followed." $12 drop-in, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, Dec. 8, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• A Chanukah concert with the **Sisters of Sheynville Quartet** promises Yiddish swing (inspired by **The Barry Sisters**) and klezmer from the 1930s and 1940s. Featuring **Lenka Lichtenberg**, **Isabel Fryszberg**, **Kinneret Sagee** and **Tony Quarrington**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, Dec. 18. $10 includes a latke lunch at 12:30 p.m., and concert at 1 to 2:30 p.m. Pre-register by Dec. 12 to 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

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Arts in Brief

• Active 55+ Cultures presents the "Antiques Appraisal Roadshow – Treasure Antiques & Appraisals of Oakville." Bring your fine and decorative art, Judaica, jewelry and coins for evaluation, $5 per assessment. Free admission. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, Dec. 4, 1:30 to 3 p.m.; doors open at 1 p.m.

• *Holiday of the Week*, Israeli artist **Yaara Eshet**'s whimsical interpretation of holidays, celebrations and United Nations Days is on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Dec. 28. ■

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A new Nobel is worth the price of admission

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The most recently translated work of the 2014 winner of the Nobel Prize for literature will present itself to many readers as a coded text. Patrick Modiano's *Suspended Sentences*, rushed into print by Yale University Press, is made up of three novella-length prose pieces, published in French between 1988 and 1993. The foreignness of their subject matter is signaled by the epigraphs chosen by the author for two stories, which are by Paul Eluard and Lamartine, French poets who may strike a chord in their home culture but will be mysterious to North American readers.

Modiano's supple, sinuous prose opens a view of lost Paris neighbourhoods and the lives once led in them. If a reader has had the unusual fortune to inhabit the down-at-heels *quartiers*, fraying edges and docklands of the city after World War II or, through avid watching of the films of Francois Truffaut and Jean Luc Godard, is familiar with the look and feel of the mid-60s black and white version of the city, Modiano will feel familiar.

For most readers, the author's finely crafted stories will offer exotic urban geographies, full of suggestive and mysterious detail: "That Sunday evening in November, I was on Rue de l'Abbé-de-l'Epée. I was skirting the high wall around the Institut des Sourds-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas. I could still recall a café at the corner of Rue Saint-Jacques, where I used to go after taking in a film at the Studio des Ursulines."

This is the opening to Modiano's *Flowers of Ruin*, a complex, noirish investigation of a young couple's death. Modiano comes to the detective story by way of its early American practitioner, Edgar Allan Poe, whose stories of detection and the grotesque the French have long loved. Poe's voice informs the narrator's as he tells us "a very strange story that occurred that night in the building at number 26 Rue des Fossés-Saint-Jacques, near the Pantheon, in the home of Mr. and Mme T."

Modiano is in love with the genres of his youth, with pulp novels and the new wave movies that portrayed wayward French men and women rambling and driving about the streets of Paris in big American convertibles. The collection's title story provides a compendium of postwar French cultural shifts – increasing American influence, new ways for women to dress (often like men), the overall sense of a society adrift – as characters turn to the pat wisdom found in Raymond Chandler novels. A crocodile cigarette case is handed over with the bromide "It'll come in handy later on"; two brothers who are taken care of by a mysterious group of women are told by a visitor "You should read pulps."

As he leads the reader through the twists and turns of *Flowers of Ruin*, Modiano directs us to the films best suited to capturing the "limpid light" he associates with a key setting in the tale. These, he tells us, are the early '60s works *Lola* and *Adieu Philippine*

Modiano's stories do not employ this kind of detail simply for historical colour, nor do they resort to the more recent tendency to drop brand names in the pursuit of hipness. Recovery of memory by way of the reference to the look and impact of a particular film follows from Modiano's effort to create a shuttling relationship between past and present.

His narrators pursue past experience, lost faces and feelings on streets that have become almost unrecognizable with the passage of time. Yet at particular moments, details of light or weather or the appearance of a stray figure transport a scene through the fog to another time. In this way, "the light of the early sixties" shows itself at one moment, and it seems "that the years had become conflated and time transparent."

Suspended Sentences
By Patrick Modiano
Yale University Press

One expects that it is this method, its philosophical and emotional impact, that interested the Nobel committee (surely it wasn't Modiano's boyhood memories of the pulps, or of girls dressed exotically, in blue jeans and leather jackets).

Reports of Modiano's receipt of the Nobel Prize highlighted his writerly relationship to the Second World War and the German occupation of Paris. His Jewish father was detained by the French police, but was quickly released. In the stories included in *Suspended Sentence*, the occupation is a ghostly but recurrent narrative detail. It lurks as a clue in *Flowers of Ruin*, since one of the narrator's memories of his father's release from an "annex of the Drancy transit camp" leads him to consider a possible player in the death of the young Mr. and Mme. T. But neither the reason for the young couple's deaths nor the facts underlying the occupation-era story become clear.

Modiano's writerly method in relation to wartime events is better seen in his 1997 novel *Dora Bruder*, which appeared first in translation under its French title and then as *Search Warrant*. In a wartime era copy of *Paris Soir*, Modiano's narrator encounters the following: "Paris. Missing, a young girl, Dora Bruder, age 15, height 1.55m, oval-shaped face, grey-brown eyes, grey sports jacket, maroon pullover, navy-blue skirt and hat, brown gym shoes. Address all information to M and Mme Bruder, 41 Boulevard Ornano, Paris."

The novel is a meditation on self, in light of the events of wartime, and on the kind of memory work that compels its author: "I can hardly believe that this is the city where Dora lived with her parents, where my father lived when he was 20 years younger than I am now. I feel as if I am alone in making the link between Paris then and Paris now, alone in remembering all these details. There are moments when the link is stretched to breaking-point, and other evenings when the city of yesterday appears to me in fugitive gleams behind that of today."

This search after a lost girl is echoed in the stories of *Suspended Sentences*, where it is, instead, Paris of the postwar years and into the 1960s, whose "fugitive gleams" lead the reader on unlikely adventures. In this, Modiano is a detective of time, applying Poe's methods of detection to far more pressing and troubling ends. ■

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What's New

DEC. 4 - DEC. 11

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Dec.4

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS
Arnold Ages reviews *Jews and the Military: A History*, by **Derek Penslar**, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

THE KING WHO SAID NO
Prince Hermann Leinengen discusses the history behind his grandfather, the king of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Jews who were spared from concentration camps, 8 p.m., Congregation Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave. 416-782-7125.

YIDDISH VINKL
Mark Clayman, co-chair of the Toronto Jewish Film Society, discusses how films are chosen, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Friday, Dec. 5

A JEW IN A NON-JEWISH WORLD
"A Jew in a non-Jewish world" is the theme of a weekend of lectures sponsored by YU Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov at Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto. Speakers include **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, **Rabbi Josh Gutenberg** and **Rabbi David Ely Grundland**. 647-234-7299.

Saturday, Dec. 6

TORAH STUDY
Irv Sherman leads the Torah study at Beth Tikvah Synagogue this morning.

Sunday, Dec. 7

PREMIER SPEAKS
Ontario Premier **Kathleen Wynne** speaks at Temple Har Zion, 7:30 p.m.

Deadline Reminders:
Deadlines will change due to the winter holidays. The deadline for the issue of Dec. 18 is Dec. 8. The deadline for the issue of Dec. 25 is **Dec.9.** *The CJN will not publish Jan. 1. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 8 is* **Dec. 15.** *All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email* **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto Section, hosted a formal presentation Nov. 17, to acknowledge the generous donation of an oil painting of resistance fighter Sara Ginaite-Rubinson. During the German occupation of Lithuania, Ginaite-Rubinson was a member of the underground resistance movement in the ghetto in Kaunas. Artist Harry Tiefenbach, seen with Ginaite-Rubinson has painted a series of portraits of women resistance fighters, including the one pictured here.

VINTAGE CLOTHING SALE
Koffler Centre for the Arts, 180 Shaw St., is holding a designer vintage clothing sale fundraiser, today and tomorrow. Visit kofflerarts.org.

ROBERT THE MAGICIAN
Robert the Magician performs at Beth David Synagogue,11:30 a.m. $10. Register at bethdavid.com.

CELEBRATING JEWISH STUDIES
Michael Brown, York University, discusses "Not the other university: Jewish Studies at York," and **Jonathan Sarna**, Brandeis, discusses "Whither Jewish Studies," in celebration of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre's 25th anniversary, 7 p.m., Robert McEwen Auditorium, Schulich School of Business, York University. 416-736-5823 or www.yorku.ca/cjs.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN JERUSALEM
Arieh King discusses "What is happening in Jerusalem now and why," 7:30 p.m., at Chabad Flamingo.

Monday, Dec. 8

SMALL WONDERS
Small Wonders, which supports Jewish couples experiencing infertility, is hosting "A Night of Wonder" at Holt Renfrew, 50 Bloor St. For tickets, visit smallwonders.ca or 416-742-0090.

FILM BEFORE THE BLACKLIST
Stuart Hands discusses "Jewish film before the blacklist." Tonight *Body and Soul*, 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple.

THE GENESIS OF ETHICS
Ira Schweitzer discusses "The genesis of ethics," looking at the moral dilemmas in the book of Genesis and how they apply to the modern day, 7 p.m., Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie. 705-792-3949.

Wednesday, Dec. 10

WOMEN'S LIVES
Pam Shainhouse discusses founding Alli's Journey, which supports cancer patients, following the death of her daughter. 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

HEBREW CLASSES
Conversational Hebrew, Ulpan method with **Yael Lev**, intermediates Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; advanced Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Two classes forming. Learn to read and write and Beginners conversational Hebrew. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

CHANUKAH CONCERTS
- Friends of Yiddish hold their Chanukah concert, featuring **The Yiddish Swingtet** and **Kyra Folk-Farber, Dec. 14,** 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $8/$15. RSVP by Dec. 8 to **Sandy** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca
- The Toronto Heschel School presents the musical performance of the Chanukah story featuring **Kayla, Dec. 14,** 10:30 a.m., 819 Sheppard Ave. W. $20 per family, RSVP concert@toronto-heschel.org.
- The Morris Winchevsky School celebrates Chanukah with a sing-a-long led by **Marni Levitt**, **Dec. 14,** 11 a.m., 918 Bathurst St. $5/$10. RSVP 416-789-5502 or www.mwstoronto.org.
- **The Maccabeats** perform at a Chanukah festival, **Dec. 21**, 3 p.m. Chabad of Markham, $25. www.chabadmarkham.org or 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

INTERNSHIPS
Emunah Toronto is offering two internship opportunities for university students who would like to work in a religious Zionist setting at Neve Michael, an Israeli children's village, starting June 2015. Call 416-636-0036 or www.emunahcanada.org

ARKADI & COMPANY
Club Chaverut presents music by **Arkadi & Company,** Dec. 14, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. 905-764-8141.

LATKE NIGHT
Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto holds a latke and game night for youth, **Dec. 13,** 6:30 p.m. Register at www.bayt.ca.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MACCABI CANADA
Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile, (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

MUSIC AND TALK
Morasha presents a new series of conversations about the influences of Jewish music upon western classical music, led by **Jerry Fink.** Starts Jan. 7, Beth Emeth Synagogue. 416-789-7400.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.
- Dating in mid-life: A workshop for people over 40 who have been single for two years or more. Dec. 17, 7 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Antiques appraisal roadshow. Bring your art, Judaica, jewelry and coins to our valuation clinic. $5 per item. Dec. 4, doors open at 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- Pharmaceutical counselling clinic with **Alan Rothman**, Dec. 10, 9:30 a.m.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Pickleball, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colin@mnjcc.org
- Nutritionist **Trish Krause** discusses "Healthy eating for the holidays," Dec. 10, noon and 6:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 4, lecture on "Colours in our life," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah with live entertainment. Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine. Dec. 10; Seniors balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Mah-jong Dec. 4, noon.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila**, 416-665-3333, or **Judi**, 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $20/$25. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- If you love Yiddish and good conversation, drop in Mondays starting Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents the art of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, Feb. 17, Feb. 24 at 1 p.m.
- All levels welcome for ceramics courses starting January.
- Join intermediate mah-jong, starting Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m.
- **Janet Klein Slavin** teaches moving meditation, starting Jan. 8, 10:30 a.m.
- Stroke recovery, Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, 9:30 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

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- Register now for winter programs. Members registration open Dec. 3, non-members Dec. 10.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Mondays, 11 a.m. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Subscribe today to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January and December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Un Secret* Dec. 7 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., with guest speaker **Bernice Eisenstein.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses The Beatles. Dec. 8, "Carry that weight: Breaking up and the legacy that followed," 7 p.m.
- Havdalah and Chanukah pool party, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.
- Chanukah Family Fun Fair, Dec. 14, 2-5 p.m. Food, crafts, games and more. $15/$20 per family.
- **The Sisters of Sheynville** perform a Chanukah concert, Dec. 18, latke lunch at 12:30 p.m., concert at 1 p.m. $10. Register by Dec. 12, ext. 0.
- *Holidays of the Week*, by **Yaara Eshet** is in the gallery until Dec. 28.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

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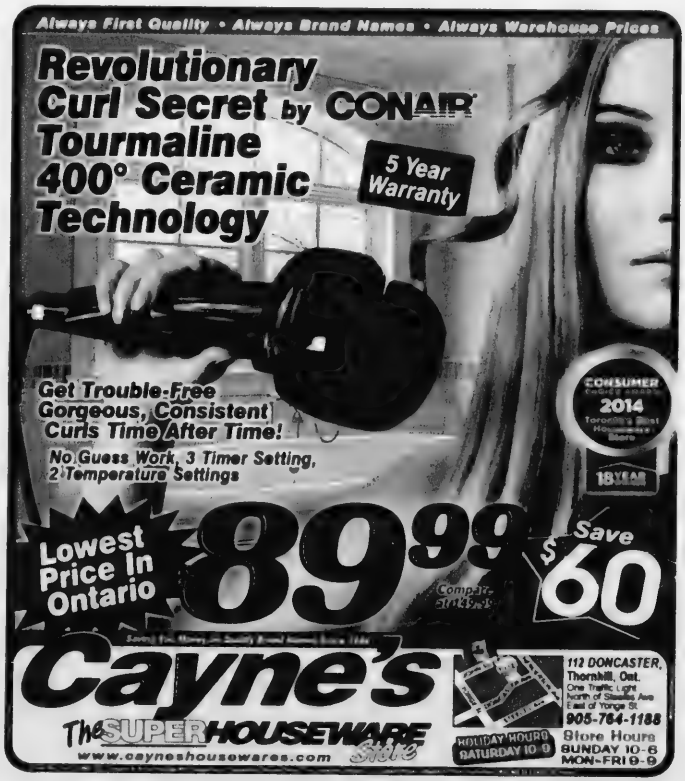
- All levels welcome for adult ceramics, starts Jan. 7, 7 p.m.
- Enjoy a glass workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- Mah-jong classes start Jan. 13
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental Mix Media," starting Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
- PJ Plus is a parent and me program for ages 18 months to 3 years, Sundays starting Jan. 25, 10 a.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■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WRY BREAD

Failing with flying colours

David Levine

With autumn behind us and the end of the semester just around the corner, it's important for the whole family to prepare for the potential shock waves that a report card can send through your home.

This isn't for everyone – a small minority of well-adjusted, academically gifted parents and students will be sticking report cards on refrigerators, celebrating, and generally enjoying each other's company. To you I say: congratulations on your success, and even your closest friends resent you. Feel free to use this time to clear up some diploma space on your perfect walls.

Normal people, listen up: familiarizing yourself with these survival strategies is your only way through a potentially devastating moment of self-awareness and communication. Let's start with the kids in the house. Parents, hand this to your child and leave the room. It's OK. I'm a professional

Are they gone?

First off: admit nothing. Trying to "soften the landing" by hinting at the terrible grades to come is a rookie mistake. From now on, you are anticipating greatness. You deserve greatness. Act proud of your efforts and genuinely shocked by the results. Remember that your parents will love you no matter what – that's their biggest weakness. So don't be afraid to try out several of the following excu-reasons why your grades are misleading or unfair:

1. School is dumb. There's an app for everything they're trying to teach.
2. That grade is a lot higher than it seems. Everyone else is doing much worse.
3. Your teacher isn't fair. Other kids misbehave without getting in trouble. (Make up an example.)
4. You lost all those marks for talking in class, but really someone else was talking and you got in trouble for it.
5. The whole exam was based on the thing you missed that day you were sick.
6. Do you have chores around the house? Tell your parents you have too many responsibilities.
7. No chores? Tell your parents they don't trust you enough.
8. Tell your parents how many of your classmates are on ADD medication (exaggerate). Complain about their unfair advantage. If you're currently taking ADD medication, complain about a "culture of over-diagnosis." Tell your parents you don't feel like yourself anymore.
9. Accept responsibility and set measurable goals for future success. (totally joking just wanted to see if you were still reading.)

OK, now hand this back to your parents. You could keep reading, but that sounds a lot like homework, doesn't it?

Parents, I'm not going to lie. It can be hard to see your child judged by the world, and even harder to realize they might not be exceptional. It's time to face some uncomfortable facts: your child is perfect. The system is in a constant state of catastrophic failure and trying to excuse itself by casting blame on you, the parents. Resist any temptation to blame yourself. Remember: you're the victim here. Internalize three to five of the following defences before parent-teacher interviews roll around:

1. Your child is intimidated by the success (failure) of an older (younger) sibling.
2. Your child is so advanced that s/he is bored in class.
3. Schools are too soft nowadays. The strong example you set at home is being undermined in the classroom.
4. Schools are too strict nowadays. When did children stop being children?
5. There are too many students in that class.
6. That teacher/principal/psychiatrist/guidance counsellor/parole officer is incompetent.
7. The Internet. (Can be used to verify any opinion about child behaviour. Bonus points for referencing Snapchat or Grand Theft Auto.)
8. Public school parents: Denounce public school as a waste of time. Blame government subsidy structure.
9. Private school parents: Denounce private school as a waste of money. Blame government subsidy structure.
10. Your child should/shouldn't have been tested for ADD/ADHD. And besides, the tests are wrong.
11. Memorize a list of successful people who never graduated high school. Embellish. Cite liberally.

Good luck, and remember: if you have any questions about the above, it means it wasn't written clearly enough. ■

Family Moments

With love, we introduce Gabriella Faith Chemtob Stadtlander, born Oct. 28. Daughter of Jason & Alona, sister to Rachel. Grandparents, Jack & Dorothy Stadtlander, Anna Chemtob.

Happy 90th birthday Brindle Burkes! A longtime volunteer at the Bernard Betel Centre and with NAAMAT Toronto, Club Beersheba. Much love, family and friends.

Mazel tov to Lil & Ron Jacobson on their 50th wedding anniversary. All our love from your family, Shawn, Mark, Joshua, Sheila and Harvey.

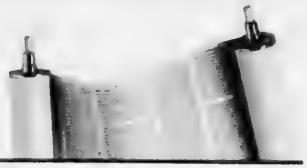
Mazel tov to Edith Borer Segal on her special 95th birthday. A remarkable and loving mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother. Love, your family.

Mazel tov to Jordan Levett on becoming a bar mitzvah! Thanks for being such an amazing friend. Michael

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Vayishlach | Genesis 32:4 - 36:43



Rabbi Aaron Katchen says when we return to Israel, we are rewarding Rachel
Rabbi Michal Shekel explains how the women of Vayishlach compel all of us to listen
Rabbi Howard Morrison suggests that questioning God is an authentic Jewish expression

Aaron Katchen

"So Rachel died, and she was buried on the road to Efrat, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob erected a monument on her grave; that is the tombstone of Rachel until this day."

Jacob loved Rachel. He enslaved himself to his father-in-law for her hand. And then, all too soon, she died in childbirth, on the family's return to Jacob's ancestral land. Instead of burying her in the family plot in Hebron, she was buried where she died, in Efrat. Why didn't Jacob travel the extra day to Hebron to bury her?

The location of her death matters, in that it is on the eastern edge of the land of Israel. Her burial site was witness to the Babylonian expulsion after the destruction of the First Temple. The long line of her descendants shuffled past on their way into exile. Jeremiah's prophecy invokes this image: "Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, of mourning and great weeping – Rachel weeping for her children; she has refused to be comforted for her children, for they are no more." (Jeremiah 31:14). Jeremiah continues: "Your children will return to their borders" (Jeremiah 31:16).

The image of "Mama Rochel" weeping for her children has been a powerful image through a long exile. A midrash on this scene states: "Know that I buried her there at God's command, so that she would aid her children. When Nebuzaradan exiled them, they passed by there, and Rachel left her grave and wept and begged for mercy on their behalf... And God responds: 'Your work will be rewarded – declares the Lord... your children will return to their borders.'" Through these verses we have the opportunity to witness the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy. We are returning to Israel, to grant our mother her reward: her children's return to their borders. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

More women are mentioned in Vayishlach than in any other parshah I can recall. Genesis 33 recounts the tragic fate of Dinah. Chapter 35 names Deborah, Rebecca's nurse. Eight verses later, Rachel dies in childbirth. And a few verses after that, we find out that Reuben consorted with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine and Rachel's maidservant.

As is often the case, we find out little about these women beyond their names. What lesson is there in the fact that Rebecca and her nurse Deborah were still close in Rebecca's adulthood? We hear nothing from Dinah who was raped and held by a perpetrator claiming to love her, even wanting to marry her. What of Bilhah? The text suggests force was used against her. Again, the woman is silent.

Only one woman speaks: Rachel. Before dying, she names her second son Ben-Oni. Yet in the very next verse, all traces of this are erased when Jacob decides to name the child Benjamin.

The women of this parshah challenge us to listen. We must be sensitive to messages conveyed through silence. We must also be careful not to obliterate the message of those who rarely speak.

Toward the end of his life, Jacob takes his grandsons Ephraim and Menashe as his own sons, claiming to do so in Rachel's memory. This act, occurring so many years after her death, shows how Rachel influenced Jacob in ways we cannot imagine.

Despite modern society's inclination, it is rarely the attention-seekers who leave a lasting mark on us. Enduring influence may come in quiet moments from people who labour silently but diligently, affecting us in profound ways. Such influence only becomes evident as it unfolds over time. As with the women in Vayishlach, we may not have their words, but their work endures. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the spiritual leader at Or Hadash Synagogue, Newmarket, Ont.

Howard Morrison

When I was young, my father used to take me to pro wrestling matches, and the memories have stayed with me.

The origins of pro wrestling can be seen in Parshat Vayishlach, where Jacob gets into a wrestling match and comes out limping. It's not clear with whom Jacob was wrestling – an angel of God? An angelic representative of Esau? Jacob's inner being or alter ego? Even if Jacob's match was set up by a higher power, our fan favourite, Jacob, still came out limping.

Afterward, Jacob's name is changed to Yisrael – one who has wrestled with God and prevailed. When wrestling, one is likely to get hurt. But refusing to wrestle can be even more detrimental to our spiritual and emotional life. People who don't confront their inner demons or others' acts of injustice may have more life challenges than those who boldly confront challenges. Those who negate the presence of God and live without a genuine belief in a higher presence may live a more challenging life than those whose faith is genuine and uplifting.

Questioning God, struggling with God and even doubting God are authentic Jewish expressions, because they all maintain a relationship with a higher presence. In contrast, denying God denies our relationship with a higher presence. Our tradition has hundreds of terms for God, so there's plenty of room to find at least one that allows a relationship with the Divine. Terms such as Adonai (my Master), HaShem (the Name), Elokim (our Father our King), Shchinah (the indwelling presence), and Harachaman (the compassionate one) let each of us find a way of relating to God individually.

It's no accident that we're called the people of Israel, the people that wrestles and simultaneously prevails with God. It's through the authentic expression of struggling with our beliefs that we come to a truer understanding of ourselves and our place in God's presence. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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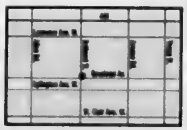

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There will be no January 2nd CJN published

The CJN offices will be closed December 22-26.

Best-selling author published her first book at 72

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If William Wordsworth's words are true – that "the child is father to the man" – we need look no deeper than into the trying years of the Great Depression to understand the person whom Jacqueline Park became.

Although she modestly attributes her success to "a series of fortunate accidents," there is no doubt that strength of character, the embrace of hard work, curiosity of mind, and commitment to causes and to family, have also played a role in the near nonagenarian's many achievements.

Park is an acclaimed novelist, currently working on the third installment of a three-part literary saga that began with *The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi*, a remarkable 15th-century Italian Jewish woman, and continues with newly published *The Legacy of Grazia dei Rossi*, about the travails of Grazia's son in the court of the Ottoman ruler, Suleiman the Great.

The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi, published in 1997, became an acclaimed, international bestseller. But Park, then 72, was not finished writing. "I came from television," she said, "where the motto is: Always leave room for a sequel."

Park picked up the novelist's pen in her seventh decade. To that point she had led a very active, creative life in the world of documentary and commercial filmmaking, teaching, homemaking and parenthood.

I recently met with Park at her home in downtown Toronto where she shared some fascinating highlights of her wondrous, personal saga.

Born Jacqueline Rosen in Winnipeg in 1925, she grew up during the harsh years of the Depression. Park has very clear recollections of that uncertain time which left deep scars, she explained. Like an invisible hand shaping the clay of the soul, it formed the characters of an entire generation of young people.

Her professional career began early. While writing for *The Manitoban*, the student newspaper of the University of Manitoba, she interviewed John Grierson, the founder of Canada's National Film Board, who was visiting from Ottawa.

Impressed with his young interviewer, Grierson invited Park to Ottawa to work for the nascent Film Board in support of Canada's war efforts. Though still a teenager, she jumped at the chance.

Jacqueline Park

> *Like many young Jewish idealists of the 1940s, the couple wanted to improve the world*

Due to a shortage of manpower, Park performed a wide variety of tasks and learned many facets of filmmaking. Those various skills would provide a pathway to filmmaking-related work throughout her adult life.

After a short stay in Chicago, Park enrolled in graduate school at the University of Toronto. In Toronto she met, fell in love and eloped with Gurston Rosenfeld. Like many young Jewish idealists of the 1940s, the couple wanted to improve the world. So Jacqueline and Gurston moved to Grimsby, Ont. and joined a *hechalutz* (pioneering) group doing *hachsharah* (training) in preparation for life on a kibbutz in Mandatory Palestine, now Israel. But the young couple never made it to Israel. They moved back to Toronto. Then, after their two daughters were born, they went their separate ways.

In 1960, accepting an offer from the Rockefeller Foundation to work on a series of educational films, Park took her two children and moved to New York. Among other opportunities there, she did some freelance television writing for the CBC. And she married Ben Park, an executive with NBC. "It was a very heady time," Park reminisced of her life in New York.

The Tisch School for the Arts at New York University then hired her to teach dramatic writing and she rose in the faculty's ranks to become chair of the dramatic writing department. She is now professor emerita, after retiring some eight years ago.

While still teaching, in 1990, Park found the courage – as she described it – to try her hand at writing a novel. She "lacked the confidence to start," but once she did, she quickly developed her literary momentum.

The genesis for *The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi* was an exchange of original correspondence from Renaissance Italy that Park found in the archives of the New York Public Library. Park discovered letters between Isabella Gonzaga d'Este and a young Jewish woman, Pacienza Pontremoli. Countess d'Este urged Pacienza to convert to Christianity. The young woman refused. Park explained that she "could not relate to the women of the Renaissance in general. But I could relate to the situation and plight of the Jewish women of the Renaissance." The courageous Pacienza became the model for the fictitious Grazia dei Rossi.

The Legacy of Grazia dei Rossi, reviewed in these pages recently, appeared 17 years after her first book. Life and circumstances, however, had intervened to slow down the pace of Park's writing. She developed macular degeneration, severely impairing her vision. A writing assistant helps her now. Together, they are working on the third installment of the Grazia dei Rossi saga.

Park is determined to finish the trilogy. "I believe we are at the dawning of a new era because of all the scientific discoveries in medicine. People are living and functioning longer."

Given her track record, there is no reason to doubt that she will. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 4, 2014

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin: on conversion, I follow the Talmud

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, the Brooklyn-born chief rabbi of the Israeli settlement of Efrat, was at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation last month for an event organized by Torah in Motion, a non-profit that provides people opportunities to learn, study, teach, and debate issues facing the Jewish world.

Rabbi Riskin shared his personal story in an interview with Torah in Motion co-founder Elliott Malamet and talked about "The True Significance of the War in Gaza."

In an interview with *The CJN*, Rabbi Riskin addressed some of the issues he's tackling as an influential, and sometimes controversial, religious figure in Israel.

What was the overall message you wanted to send to your Toronto audience?

The mission of the people of Israel, ever since the election of Abraham, the first Hebrew close to 4,000 years ago, was that we must bring blessing to the world by teaching God's message of the inviolability of the human being, of the importance of spreading compassionate righteousness and moral justice to all nations, and thus bringing peace to the world.

This is what the world is all about. In other words, the world has got to understand, so that you understand my position, that Hamas is ISIS, is Iran, is extremist Islam. There are two forces in the world: Israel, who teaches of the God of love and that compassionate righteousness must emerge supreme versus an antithetical ideology that harks back to Sparta Rome and runs through Babylon, Persia, Hitler, Stalinist Communism and extremist Islam that worships power and conquest of the world by jihad.

The prime minister of Canada understands this. Very few other world leaders do.

You've been writing and speaking a lot about new conversion laws in Israel and the argument for some is that the government is making the laws more lenient. What do you think are the implications of these new laws?

I was a very strong proponent of the new conversion law, which gives every city rabbi the chance to do conversions in Israel. All the city rabbis in Israel are Orthodox. There is no non-Orthodox city rabbi in Israel. I'm one of the city rabbis.

The chief rabbinate, just about 15 years ago, demanded exclusivity in the area of conversion, something that was not the case since the Israeli state was founded, and there has never been only one exclusive manner of converting for the last 2,000 years. There were more lenient and more stringent attitudes toward conversion within Jewish Orthodoxy. And I would insist on the right for this to exist today as well, especially since the chief rabbinate has been taken over by the haredim, the ultra-Orthodox. They're worried that gentiles will come into Judaism without proper conversion.

Are you considered a controversial figure in Israel because of your views?

[Laughing] I won the battle. It depends which camp you're in, I guess. I believe that Judaism wants converts and that we are commanded 36 times to love the convert and the stranger, and that that love begins as soon as a person shows interest in converting.

I also want it to be understood that there are 350,000 Israeli citizens from the former Soviet Union who are not halachically considered Jewish and require conversion. If we are not user friendly toward them, in one generation, the intermarriage rate in Israel will rival that of New York. By user friendly I mean for them to feel like they

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

are being welcomed and secondly, to insist on what the Talmud insists, and not to add stringencies. The Talmud says you tell them some of the more stringent laws, and some of the more lenient laws and, I'm quoting now, you are not to be too exacting or too harsh. The Talmud wanted converts who'd accept the basic principals of Judaism and the basic rituals of Judaism, but not to be exacting and not to be too harsh. That is not the attitude of most of the cohorts of the chief rabbinate today in Israel.

In terms of women's rights, I've read that you are a supporter of allowing women to have more roles in religious practice and you advocate for agunot – women who are trapped in marriages by husbands who refuse to grant them a divorce. Is that another controversial issue?

I believe that whatever Jewish law would permit women to do ritually or would be permitted, that first and foremost – this is my biggest fight – women must be permitted to sue for divorce. If a woman wants a divorce, she has to be given the right to receive one. This is possible within Jewish law, but unfortunately, it is not the way Jewish law is being interpreted by many of the judges in Israel.

I'm not seeking an amendment to the law. It's the same thing that I'm saying about conversion. I'm not seeking amendments to the laws, I'm not seeking to make change. I'm only seeking to apply the laws, which already exist in the Talmud.

What is the biggest challenge facing Israel and the Diaspora?

The biggest challenge facing Jews in Israel is the fact that the world, less than seven decades after the Holocaust, is repeating all of the old anti-Semitic canards against the Israeli state, and preaching the big lie that we are an apartheid state and that we are occupying land which is not ours.

From the beginning of this conflict with the Palestinians, we have always been willing to share, and they have never been willing to share. From the beginning of this conflict, we have never targeted the innocent, and they have always targeted the innocent in terrorist shootings, in suicide bomber attacks. And since the establishment of the state, Palestinians have been elected to the Knesset and have been able to say anything that they think, no matter how anti-Israel it may be.

Tragically, the world is accepting the lies and condemning Israel... with one of the only exceptions being your prime minister, to whom I am very grateful for his critical voice of honesty and reason in a sea of darkness vis-a-vis Israel. That's the greatest problem. ■

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
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Debating destruction

Backstory

CARL S. EHRLICH

Judaism has often responded to disaster with the human need to make sense of the catastrophe, to understand it theologically, and to draw ethical and moral lessons from it.

The most recent epochal tragedy to impact Judaism has been the Holocaust, whose import is still being worked through. Responses have ranged from Hannah Arendt's controversial theory of the banality of evil to speculation on the absence of God, and the obscene attempt to make the martyred six million responsible for their own murders by attributing the crime to divine anger for some alleged minor halachic infraction.

Less controversial, presumably because of the longer passage of time, has been the rabbinic attribution of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE to *sinat chinam*, "baseless hatred" among the defenders of Jerusalem. The rabbis drew a moral lesson from a historical event that should perhaps be more correctly attributed to Rome's merciless might. But, in discounting historical reality in favour of theological speculation, the rabbis were following a Jewish tradition. Indeed, Judaism might never have come into existence had it not been for an act of theological hubris.

When the Babylonians destroyed the Kingdom of Judah and the First Temple in 586 BCE, one might have been forgiven for assuming that this meant the defeat of the God of Israel by the gods of Babylon and the consequent disappearance of the Judeans from the world stage. Instead, the Judean religious leaders had the chutzpah to claim that their God, the God of a small, insignificant backwater, was actually a universal God and was using the Babylonians to punish the Judeans. In other words, all of human history revolved around the Judeans though the agency of their God.

The theological lessons to be learned from this destruction, however, were the subject of a debate whose lengthy course may be traced in the pages of the Tanach, the Jewish Bible.

The first response was ventured in the book of Kings, whose authors were still grappling with an event that was fresh in their minds. Convinced of their own innocence, they attributed the Babylonian destruction to the sins of King Manasseh, who had lived around a century earlier.

The anonymous author(s) of Kings were criticized by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who claimed that God would not punish people for the sins of others but only for their own sins, thus disagreeing with Kings and the Torah itself (Exodus 34:7)! These prophets felt that the Babylonian destruction could be attributed to the sins of the generation of the catastrophe.

The book of Chronicles extends this notion of personal responsibility in both a positive and a negative manner. The destruction is attributed to the generation of those who lived through it. And while agreeing with Kings' negative evaluation of Manasseh, Chronicles partially exonerates him, and even invents a story about his conversion to good, in order to explain his long life and reign.

Ultimately, however, even this theology of personal responsibility, which posits that the good are rewarded and the evil punished here and now, came under attack. The cynical book of Ecclesiastes looks at the world and can identify no discernable pattern in the fate of humanity. There are good people who suffer and evil ones who prosper. Although one should live a good life of moderation, one cannot hope to influence one's fate by one's actions.

This despair is echoed in the sublime book of Job, about an innocent man who suffers because of a divine bet. Near the end of the book, God Himself is called to account for justice in the world. But instead of answering, God questions humanity's ability to understand the workings of the world.

After examining this issue from a number of perspectives, the Bible ultimately questions our ability to understand. No wonder the books of Ecclesiastes and Job have proved the most influential on theologians trying to find answers within Judaism to the incomprehensible enormity of the Holocaust. ■

Carl S. Ehrlich is director of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and professor of humanities at York University, Toronto.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

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Emile State	Nov 15/14	50 John Street
Renee Hock	Nov 15/14	422 Hounslow Ave.
Marlene Ravinsky	Nov 16/14	138 Weldrick Road, W.
Sari Troister	Nov 17/14	65 Skymark Drive
Rebecca Hoch	Nov 15/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Tommy Simon	Nov 16/14	5460 Yonge Street
Eddie Mendelson	Nov 16/14	99 North Post Oak Lane
Janna Adler	Nov 18/14	96 Winding Lane
Gerry Epstein	Nov 19/14	147 Thornway Ave.
Ralph Carmona	Nov 19/14	3600 Yonge Street
Guennadi Kaminiar	Nov 19/14	135 Antibes Drive
Renee Berkun	Nov 20/14	4251 Dundas Street W.
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Recalling my dear father,

Leo Berman ל"ז

on the 44th Anniversary of his passing, on December 5, 1970.
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Gail Karen Berman, Daughter

In Memory Of
ADA WYNSTON, Z"L

The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extends sincerest condolences to the Wynston / Moscoviter family on the passing of Ada, z"l, a Holocaust survivor speaker and longtime volunteer at our Centre who was recognized for her work in Holocaust education and Christian-Jewish relations.

May her memory be a blessing.

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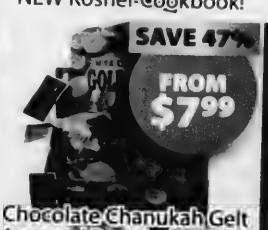

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Inside

Israelis heading back to the polls
Netanyahu's coalition splinters. Six pages of news and analysis.
PAGES 6, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51

Remembering Le Gros Bill
Canadiens great Jean Béliveau had close ties with the Jewish community.
PAGE 24

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:16 p.m.	5:24 p.m.
Montreal	3:52 p.m.	5:02 p.m.
Toronto	4:22 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:09 p.m.	5:24 p.m.
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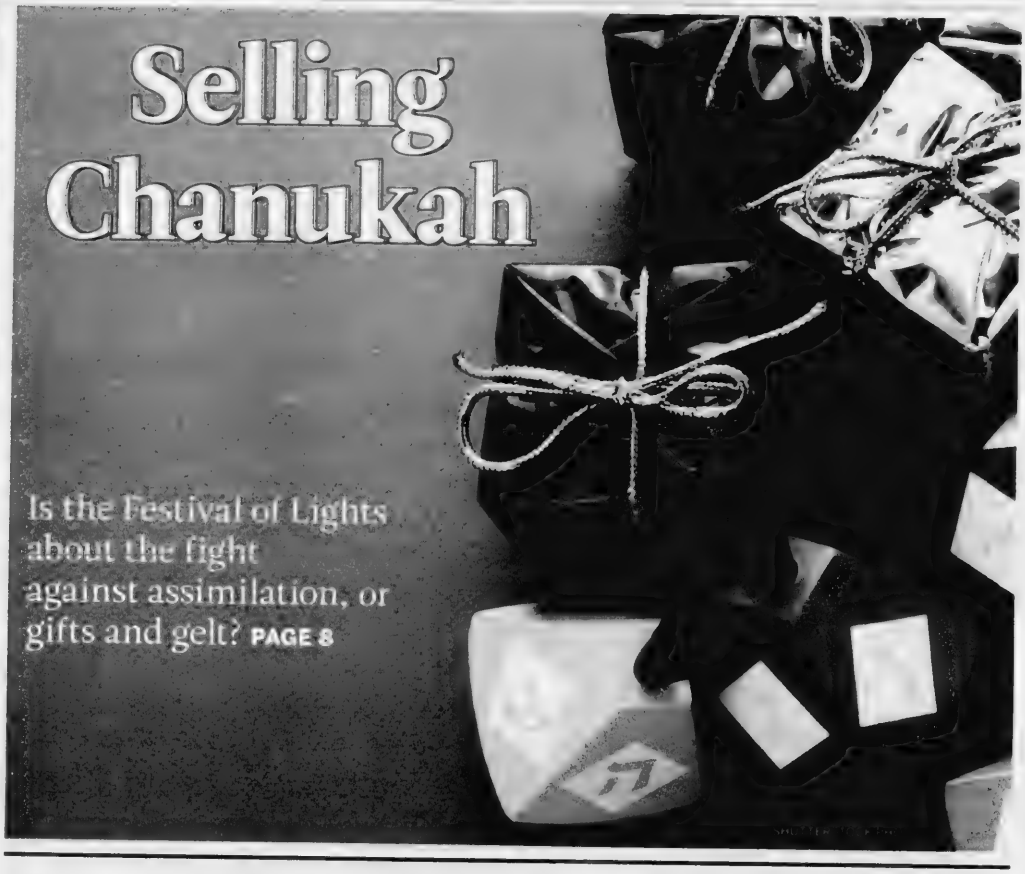
Vancouver	3:55 p.m.	5:09 p.m.



Selling Chanukah

Is the Festival of Lights about the fight against assimilation, or gifts and gelt? **PAGE 8**

Concordia students endorse BDS

University president denounces boycotts after vote in favour of anti-Israel measures. **PAGE 12**

Chanukah Greetings Supplement

Featuring *The rabbi who wouldn't backcheck: A short story*
Special Section

The IDF through a female lens

Irreverent Israeli comedy looks at women's experience in the army. **PAGE 54**

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A cut above, and soccer star Balotelli sticks foot in mouth

U.S. might recommend circumcision

Sweden, Norway and Denmark may be discussing bans on male circumcision, but the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention unveiled new draft guidelines last week that say its benefits mean it should be recommended to parents of newborn boys. The guidelines say circumcision lowers the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as other health issues. The CDC based its recommendations on clinical trials from 2005 to 2010, but said evidence has been accumulating for years.

His mother is Jewish, so it's OK...?

Super Mario plumbs the depths

Italian soccer player Mario Balotelli, who grew up the foster son of a Jewish mother, tweeted an apology Dec. 3 for a racist and anti-Semitic Instagram post. The post, featuring a photo of Nintendo game character Super Mario, read, in part, that the character "jumps like a black man and grabs coins like a Jew." Balotelli, 24, who plays for Liverpool, is nicknamed Super Mario. He's the son of immigrants from Ghana. He was also charged by England's Football Association under its rules against racism in social media posts. His apology tweet said in part, "The post was meant to be anti-racist with humour. I now understand that out of context it may have the opposite effect." The rest of the Super Mario post read: "Don't be racist. Be like Mario. He's an Italian plumber, created by Japanese people, who speaks English and looks like a Mexican." After criticism, Balotelli tweeted, "My Mom is jewish so all of u shut up please."

Lawmakers show Cotler the love

Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler was voted parliamentarian of the year by his peers from all parties in an annual tribute organized by *Maclean's* magazine. "Irwin is, first and foremost, a parliamentarian who has a deep respect for Parliament... and the House of Commons as the primary centre of power in our democracy" and is prepared to put partisanship aside when necessary, said Tory MP Michael Chong. As Cotler noted, Parliament is "where coalitions can form across party lines on certain cases and causes and move them forward." ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

102

The age Adolf Eichmann aide Alois Brunner would be today. Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center declared last week that Brunner is likely dead and buried in Damascus, Syria.

2

The number of pandas China has agreed to send to the Haifa Zoo, if the zoo builds a special habitat for the animals.

Quotable

I never made the final descent into terrorism.

— Author Yossi Klein Halevi on his youthful flirtation with Kahanist extremism. Q&A, p. 14

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Enjoy Chanukah tunes with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

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Letters to the Editor

Where are the Turks?

When I read the article "The Jews of jihad," (Nov. 13) about the amazing relationship, trust and respect between the Turks and the Jews in Turkey, I could not help but remember reading how Turkish diplomats in France and Rhodes put their own lives at risk rescuing Jews, mainly scientists, musicians, medical workers and artists of Turkish origin.

Where are those Turks now?

Rouhama Danto
Toronto

Judaism and the right to die

Dr. Michael Gordon is quoted propagating the common misconception among both physicians and members of the public that in order to achieve comfort, the opioids used have a secondary effect of shortening life ("Balancing Judaism and the right to die," Dec. 4).

In reality, evidence from clinical trials clearly shows that when properly administered, opioids have no effect on breathing, and do not hasten death.

Palliative care can provide a way to allow natural death in comfort and dignity. It is not and should not be the mandate of a physician to take away life or assist in doing so.

If assisted death is decriminalized, it should be left to other professionals. The sacred trust between doctor and patients mandates this.

Hershl Berman, MD
Palliative Care Specialist, Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto

Rescue vs collaboration

Gaylen Ross compares the actions of Rezso Kasztner with Oskar Schindler, asking why one is considered a hero, while the other, a leading member of the Hungarian Jewish community, has been labelled a collaborator ("When rescue is not collaboration," Dec. 4). This is a disingenuous comparison that does not reflect the realities of each of their situations.

The people who Schindler saved were not his friends or political allies, and he was never in a position to be able to protect more people than he did. Kasztner on the other hand, was in a position of influence and power within the Hungarian Jewish community and did make personal decisions regarding who would get on the train to be saved, or not. The operation was not about saving as many Hungarian Jews as possible, but about looking after the relatives and children of the members of the Central Jewish Council and the Budapest Vaadah.

Kasztner willfully withheld information about the massacres of Jews across Europe, from the Jewish population of Hungary. He justified this in part by claiming that it would have been impractical to copy and distribute the Auschwitz Protocols report by the thousands across the country, and that the Jews would have had limited opportunities for revolt and/or resistance, in any event.

This knowledge and the power to withhold or distribute it to the Jewish community at large, placed Kasztner in a unique position to at least try to make the maximum effort possible to save as many innocent people as possible. Instead, he got caught up in his own agenda and possibly heightened sense of self-importance and made a decision that no individual person should have taken upon themselves – to deny hundreds of thousands of men, women and children the opportunity to try to escape, fight back in some way, or fend for themselves in the face of such an unprecedented threat to an entire community.

Perhaps his assessment was accurate, but we will never know, because these people were denied the opportunity to try to protect themselves by the decisions made by one man.

Zoltan Moor, a member of the Hungarian Zionist movement, and a passenger on the Kasztner train, made the following entry in his notebook on May 11, 1945: "Somebody, perhaps more than one person, will surely write the history of the liquidation of Hungarian Jewry. The Hungarian Zionists will certainly add a couple of pages to that story. I wonder if they will not forget to include their own mistakes, their own crimes."

Peter Mann
Hampstead, Que.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI·2·RABBI

How can shuls reach millenials?

They want to be authentically welcomed as individuals, not targeted by gimmicky, cookie cutter marketing. A start might be showing them that Judaism has much to say about universal causes.

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: I was recently asked to give a presentation on the topic of young adult engagement in the synagogue. This is a really tough subject to address.

Today's millennials define their Jewish identity so differently than their parents and grandparents did. I believe we have to change our entire vision of why a synagogue would want to reach out to 18-to-25-year-olds.

We can no longer believe that by engaging the young, we will replace the old. It just doesn't work that way. We need to stop seeing young adults as a means to an end and start seeing them for who they are.

Rabbi Splansky: I believe our young people want what everyone wants, but more so. They don't want to be judged for what they don't yet know, for what they do or don't do, for what they earn or where they live, for whom they choose to love. They want meaningful opportunities to discover, to contribute, to lead.

They do not want to be "marketed to" – they can sniff out the gimmicks a mile away. Most of all, they want authentic relationships, to be sincerely welcomed, noticed, appreciated and cared about. And our desperation to draw them in is a turn-off.

Our best shot to capture the imagination of "the next generation" is to acknowledge them as individuals and approach them one by one. A phone call, an invitation to dinner or coffee, an introduction to a potential job opportunity or even a bashert can open the door to something much greater. It's a slow approach, but our cookie-cutter days are long gone.

Rabbi Fishman: Today, a typical university-aged Canadian Jew will express their desire to make a difference in the world by turning outward to universal causes. As paradoxical as it sounds to some, a typical millennial might look to volunteer in Africa or Thailand as a way of expressing their Jewish identity.

We need to meet young adults where they are and tailor programming to their interests. With that in mind, we created the Acharai Fellowship at Beth Tikvah. It's a program that meets inside the synagogue to study Jewish texts that speak about poverty, slavery, teenage prostitution, pornography and human trafficking.

These are tough and gritty topics that Judaism has much to say about. By making our texts hyper-contemporary, we have been able to show that Judaism is relevant to today's world.

Rabbi Splansky: Jewish history professor Jonathan Sarna offers a glimmer of hope in the wake of the dreadful Pew Report. Sarna notes that religious recessions in America are followed by a wave of religious revival. Canadian Jews are highly secularized today, but things may change.

I believe teachers, rabbis, and synagogues have an essential role to play in ushering in the next wave of spiritual development. Social justice is an accessible and exciting path. Sacred study and prayer are usually less accessible and less satisfying for newcomers, but some are searching for these parallel pursuits of the sacred as well.

Rabbi Fishman: Impacting a young adult can sometimes be achieved by allowing them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked or make space for those society rejects. We neglect experiential education at our peril.

When we learn about the heroic stance our tradition takes on human dignity, how can we ignore those who need our help the most? Social action missions have opened up the hearts as well as souls of many of our young adults. That, as an end in itself, is something of great worth.

Rabbi Splansky: I absolutely agree that many Jewish people across all stages of life find great Jewish expression through social activism, in the spirit of the Prophets. The problem is that you don't need a synagogue to do good in the world. In just a few clicks you can book yourself a trip to lay pipelines in Guatemala or help to build the first high school for girls in Kenya, as my congregation did.

The question which needs to be asked is: "Do you feel yourself commanded to do this act? By whom or what? Is this a sacred mission? Does God have anything to do with it? Do you fulfil this act of justice or righteousness as a Jew, or "simply" as a good person? ■

How to reach us

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SeeJN | Cave Dwellers

PHOTO BY DANIELLE SHITRIT/FLASH90

Young Israelis enjoy a picnic at the Luzit Caves in central Israel on Dec. 5, 2014.

SeeJN | Business lesson

On Nov. 11, 45 grade 11 and 12 students from NCSY's Jewish Professional Alliance visited businessman and philanthropist Saul Feldberg and his wife Toby at their home to hear Saul speak about his life and business journey. Feldberg founded and owns Global, a leading manufacturer of office furniture.

From Yoni's Desk

Who benefits from an election?

As the election campaign began last week in Israel, the political ranks and the electorate were unanimous regarding at least one thing: no one seemed to want to go to the polls.

The prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, fired two of his top coalition partners from cabinet, claiming the pair plotted against him, making it impossible to govern. Yair Lapid and Tzipi Livni responded by painting Netanyahu as the power-hungry, sole instigator of his coalition's demise. And Israeli voters signalled their own frustration over being called upon to elect a new government two years ahead of schedule. According to early polls, voter participation is expected to decline for the March 17, 2015 election, compared to the previous vote in 2013.

But for an election campaign nobody apparently wanted in the first place, the political pace has been breathtaking –and there's still three months to go. The collapse of Netanyahu's coalition has elicited a multitude of new potential alliances, on the right, left and even among the Arab parties. Not to mention the genesis of a new party led by ex-Likud minister Moshe Kahlon. Before his upstart organization even had a name, it had become a major player in Israeli politics.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu and his Likud party have also been trending upward – polls indicate Likud can expect more Knesset seats in the next election, and even if a majority of Israeli voters don't want Netanyahu to continue on as prime minister, they have even less trust in all of his potential successors. That's far from a ringing endorsement, and it could render Netanyahu vulnerable to a leadership challenge, but until the vacuum is filled he remains the default option at the top.

It took just days from the first election announcement for the political tone to change from antipathy to opportunity. But it remains to be seen whether voters will embrace the campaign in the same way. In the meantime, in this week's *CJN* author and Shalom Hartman Institute senior fellow Yossi Klein Halevi offers his view of what the Israeli electorate wants.

"The reality as most Israelis today know it is a combination of left-wing and right-wing insights," he writes. "The left was correct about the dangers of occupying another people. The right was correct about the impossibility of reaching an agreement with the Palestinian national movement that denies our legitimacy in any borders. So most of us in Israel today, and I very much include myself in this, are neither left nor right, but a mixture of both. We're centrists." (For more of our Q&A with Yossi Klein Halevi, see pg. 14.)

The outgoing coalition fits that description – between them, the parties involved covered a dizzying array of social, economic, and security issues, on the right and the left. More than likely the next one will, too, no matter if Netanyahu presides over it or someone else assumes the mantle. The question remains whether the result will be different enough to justify the nearly two billion shekels ($572 million) the election is estimated to cost Israelis. Every election brings new winners and losers, but if the electorate isn't among the former, then something's not right. ■ — YONI

FEATURE

A surgeon fighting religious hatred with his own blood

Dr. Kenneth Kardash

Walking down the streets of Casablanca with his father in 1942, young Jacob Garzon saw something that would change the course of his life. It was graffiti on a wall threatening all Jews to leave Morocco.

"Until that moment, even as the oldest of 10 brothers and sisters, I had no idea of the hatred in the hearts of some of my countrymen," he now recalls.

He also had no idea that he would indeed one day leave Morocco, to dedicate his life to serving patients of all faiths as a beloved surgeon in a hospital half a world away.

Today, sitting in an office at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal where he has just retired after 44 continuous years on staff, Dr. Garzon looks every inch the worldly senior surgeon, with his silver hair and impeccably tailored suit. He also still has the athletic build of a marathon runner and a former rugby player for the Moroccan international team.

His father always encouraged his sporting pursuits, but when a scout tried to recruit him for a professional team while he was studying medical school in Paris, the choice was clear. "Being the eldest son of a Jewish mother, it was either finish medical school or be killed," he jokes.

Returning to Morocco to pursue surgical training, any hope that being a star rugby player would be an antidote to discrimination soon evaporated: his first assignment was to a hospital for lepers. "At first, I felt like an exile among those shunned by society," he says. But he came to realize that compassion for those who are different is the best response to bigotry.

This was best demonstrated one night he was on call alone in a small community hospital during his next rotation. Garzon vividly remembers the night "a young woman arrived on the back of a mule, bleeding to death from a miscarriage." After operating on her to stop the hemorrhage, and finding the blood bank empty, he lay beside the patient and had a litre of his own blood transfused directly into her.

Dr. Jacob Garzon

That she survived is remarkable. Even more so, to the hospital workers and the community, was that she was a Muslim and her life had been saved by a Jew.

The townspeople of Kenitra, Morocco, may have seen him as a hero, but as he continued his studies elsewhere it became clear that his future would be difficult in his homeland. In 1964 he, his wife Ruby and their two young children emigrated to Montreal. The process was expedited by the fact that another life he had saved was one of the passport officers!

Life was not any easier when he arrived. "Not only did I have to redo my years of surgical residency, but I remember one hospital rejecting my application as soon as they saw me fill out the box marked 'Religion!'"

> *He came to realize that compassion for those who are different is the best response to bigotry*

He found acceptance and mentorship at the Jewish General Hospital, his professional home for the remainder of his career. Ironically, his experience with endemic diseases in Morocco would help bolster his reputation as a rising star. His favourite example is when he won an argument with a more senior surgeon on how to operate on a patient whose tuberculosis had infected his spine. "It didn't hurt that I had published my medical thesis in Paris on this very subject!"

Fast-forward 20 years, to 1990. At a career phase when most doctors are enjoying the comfort of being at the peak of their skills, he decided to retrain himself in a completely new technique. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy – removing the gallbladder through tiny incisions with videogame-like instruments held outside the body – had recently been developed as a means to markedly decrease postoperative pain and accelerate recovery.

Thus, as he wryly notes, "pigs were sacrificed in the Jewish hospital for the first time – for practising the technique in a research lab!"

Soon after, he introduced the practice clinically and began teaching it to colleagues. The explosion of applications for minimally invasive surgery and, most recently, robotic surgery at the hospital is all an evolution of this pioneering work. For this and his many other contributions, Garzon was awarded the Médaille de l'Assemblée Nationale du Québec in 2007.

Although still energetic and vowing to catch up on family time, Garzon has retired from practice after a hand injury that he feels has left him with less than perfect dexterity. This is the ultimate example of a lifelong, uncompromising approach to technical excellence. But to all those he has treated and worked with through the years, he is remembered even more for his charm, warmth and genuine caring.

This devotion to providing excellent care while respecting others, forged so long ago while working as an outsider in a small hospital in Morocco, is perhaps his greatest legacy.

When asked to sum up the most valuable lesson of his career, Garzon pauses, looking down thoughtfully at his hands for a moment. "I always believed the most important thing was technical excellence. But so is caring about those around you." ■

Kenneth Kardash is a staff anesthesiologist at the Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish General Hospital and associate professor of anesthesiology at McGill University in Montreal. He has worked with Dr. Garzon for over 20 years.

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Has Chanukah sold out to consumerism?

JODIE SHUPAC
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Strolling the aisles of your local Indigo, you may, amidst the meticulously strung tinsel and the merchandise encased in all manner of Christmas frippery, encounter the somewhat unlikely Mensch on a Bench.

A crafty alternative to the popular Christmas children's toy Elf on the Shelf – a doll that, according to its online description, "helps Santa know who to put on the Naughty and Nice list" – the "mensch" is a stuffed doll made to resemble a chassidic man. Replete with grey-tinted beard, black hat and tallit, he wields a Chanukah candle, and appears as downright jolly as, well, Santa Claus.

The toy, which retails for $39.95, comes with a cardboard cutout of a menorah and an accompanying storybook about the Maccabees. The box reads: "A new Hannukkah family tradition," the idea being that the doll stays up late to watch the menorah while the house sleeps.

The "mensch" is the product of a Kickstarter campaign created by the Cincinnati-based Neal Hoffman, who told the *New York Post* he was inspired to develop the toy two years ago by his son's bad case of "elf envy."

Chanukah ornaments and Chanukah bushes are sold at Hanukkah Bush Designs. ESTHER DAVIDSON PHOTOS

Some 50,000 menschs are being produced and being sold this year in Canada, at Indigo and several other stores.

"Every year, [Chanukah] seems to become a bigger event – at least from our company's point of view," observed Mark Roberts, senior manager of high-end Toronto gift basket delivery service Hazelton's.

The company's line of luxury Chanukah baskets, which include kosher wines, chocolates and other goodies, have been selling for 25 years, with sales increasing each year.

"We're finding more baskets are selling across the country, as opposed to just within the Toronto area," Roberts noted.

Whether these sorts of products primarily target non-Jews shopping for their Jewish friends or Jews eager to jump aboard the Christmas season bandwagon, marketers are clearly capitalizing on what those outside the community seem to view as the "Jewish Christmas."

While many Jews will tell you Chanukah, which isn't mentioned in the Torah, by no means holds the same importance in the Jewish calendar as Christmas does in the secular one, many Jews are arguably embracing the glitzy, gift-oriented ethos thrust upon the holiday season by enterprising retailers.

So how does the holiday's message, traditionally understood as a fight against assimilation, get squared with an increasingly commercialized, increasingly Christmas-y Chanukah? Are we, in our desire to fit into secular (read: Christian) culture and stave off our children's Christmas envy, selling out?

Esther Davidson is the Toronto-based owner of Hanukkah Bush Designs, a three-year-old online business that sells what the website calls "contemporary holiday décor." This includes actual Chanukah bushes, Chanukah garlands, Chanukah crackers (think British-style Christmas crackers), Chanukah ornaments, lights and lawn décor.

Davidson said the products are in high demand, with customers hailing from Australia to Israel.

"These items aren't available anywhere else," Davidson, who was born in Israel and comes from Orthodox roots, said proudly.

Growing up surrounded by Christmas revelry, Davidson felt extremely excluded, and joked she has been "scarred for life."

"I felt totally deprived…I wasn't allowed to do anything that had to do with the festive season. We were surrounded by all the lights and toys, and that mean old man who never came to visit me," she lamented. Though, as a mother, she wouldn't allow an actual Christmas tree in her home, Davidson was determined that her kids have a different experience.

"That mean old man came to visit my kids!" she chuckled. "They had eight gifts. We still lit Chanukah candles and ate jelly donuts, but, you know what, we had fun…

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

Our Best Wishes for a Happy and Joyous Chanukah

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Author says Eichmann's evil was not banal

Paul Michaels

German philosopher Bettina Stangneth's book, *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*, is garnering a lot of critical attention now that the English-language edition of the 2011 German original has been released.

Her work comes at a time when a rising tide of anti-Semitism that cannot be ignored sweeps across major European centres, making Stangneth's historical research, even if not immediately related to today's events, all the more poignant. Still, unsettling developments in Europe, including, most regrettably, in areas of Germany itself, send a chilling reminder of the circumstances surrounding the Nazis' genocide of Europe's Jews and of Adolf Eichmann's central role in it. (Stangneth's inquiry holds surprises. For instance, she writes: "Scandalously, the German authorities still hold files on Eichmann that have not been released to the public because their contents are deemed to be a danger to the common good.")

Contrary to Jewish-German philosopher Hannah Arendt's portrait of Eichmann at his 1961 trial in Jerusalem as an unthinking bureaucrat carrying out orders, as reported in her extraordinarily influential 1963 book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Stangneth argues that Eichmann was a fully engaged manager of the Holocaust – the very opposite, in fact, of the "small cog" in Hitler's war on the Jews, as Eichmann described himself at his trial. It was this image Arendt conveyed to the world as a prime illustration of what she called the "banality of evil." ("A Report on the Banality of Evil" was in fact the subtitle of her book.)

Ever since Arendt coined that term, debate over the meaning of the "banality of evil" has filled volumes.

In carefully reviewing recently available archival material – the "Argentina Papers," more than 1,300 pages of Eichmann's notes while in post-war exile, and the "Sassen" interviews, taped (and transcribed) conversations undertaken there with fellow Nazi Willem Sassen, in which he bragged about his central role in the Final Solution, Stangneth refutes Arendt's "banality of evil" thesis.

Stangneth claims that, since the publication of Arendt's controversial 1963 book, "every essay on Adolf Eichmann has also been a dialogue with Hannah Arendt."

Stangneth, however, seems willing to grant Arendt a dispassionate neutrality in covering Eichmann's trial ("Like all philosophers, she wanted to understand") which may not be warranted. She allows that had Arendt had access to all archival material from Argentina (Arendt did have access to the notes Eichmann made preparing for the Sassen interview), she may not have been seduced by Eichmann's innocuous demeanour at his Jerusalem trial and would have written something more consistent with her own prior depiction of evil in her work on anti-Semitism (such as in her 1958 book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*).

Yet, having noted that Arendt had studied philosophy in Germany under Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger, Stangneth does not deal with the unsavoury facts that Heidegger was an unrepentant Nazi and that Arendt, Heidegger's lover while a student, never lost affection for him, even after she was aware of what Heidegger had become. Indeed, following the war, Arendt became Heidegger's primary champion in the West, serving to revive his philosophical prominence. (In her fascinating 1995 book *Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger*, Elzbietta Ettinger traces what she calls the "ineradicable bond" Arendt always felt for Heidegger, even against stern warnings from Jaspers.)

To what extent Arendt's bond with Heidegger may have affected the way she depicted Eichmann and his trial is an important question, as is indeed her notorious judgment in her book that "this [Judenrat] role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story [of the Holocaust]."

On May 31, 1962, his appeals exhausted, Eichmann was hanged in Jerusalem. Though she has little to say about Heidegger, Stangneth reveals that, just before his execution, and knowledgeable about Heidegger's National Socialist commitments, Eichmann asked his brother Robert to find out what Heidegger thought about last rites. ■

History's worst serial abusers

Mordechai Ben-Dat

If one of the chief obligations of national leaders is to demonstrate, through example, the preferred qualities of nationhood such as civility, tolerance, mutual respect and equal rights, then the Palestinian leaders have failed their people entirely. Ever since Arabs and Jews have contended over the same piece of land, Palestinian leaders have ignored the work of building a sovereign structure for their own people and have focused instead on tearing down the one built by the Jews.

Haj Amin El Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the first acknowledged Palestinian leader, ceaselessly railed against Jews. In 1941, he travelled to Berlin to offer Adolf Hitler his services in the genocide then unfolding. After World War II, the government of Yugoslavia sought to prosecute him for war crimes.

Ahmad Shukairy, Husseini's former aide, was the next leader of the Palestinians. In 1964, the Arab League appointed him to head the newly created Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Lebanese-born Shukairy was the first to hurl the apartheid slander at Israel even as he tirelessly advocated "driving the Jews into the sea." "We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants, and as for the survivors – if there are any – the boats are ready to deport them," Shukairy sermonized in Jerusalem on June 1, 1967.

Yasser Arafat, the next leader of the PLO, elevated terror to rich political currency even as he lied effortlessly to world leaders such as U.S. president Bill Clinton. From the lawn of the White House, with much of the world watching, he permanently foreswore violence. But his commitment was a ruse, because he actually viewed violence as a sanctified portal into Arab history. Three years after he signed the Oslo accords, he said in Stockholm, "We will not bend or fail until the blood of every last Jew from the youngest child to the oldest elder is spilt to redeem our land!"

Even though current Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas appeals more to western leaders, he does not engender the same loyalty among Palestinians that the fabled Arafat did. However, he spreads anti-Israel poison just as effectively. "The Muslim and Christian world will never accept Israeli claims that Jerusalem is theirs. Don't let our holy sites be contaminated [by the presence of Jews]," Abbas urged his people just last month.

Palestinian leaders have never strayed from their core message: the rejection of a sovereign Jewish state. And yet, it is they who have won the propaganda war against Israel. Irrespective of the nature of the outrages they incite or direct against Israel, Palestinian leaders, unfortunately, are seldom held to account by the governments of the world or the countless social activists who march in solidarity with them on the streets of Europe and North America.

But though they have won the propaganda campaign, Palestinian leaders have abjectly lost the campaign that should have mattered most to them: fostering high national character and building a country.

In place of a people arcing determinedly, even nobly, toward nation-building, mustering individual and collective energies for scientific, economic, educational, fiscal, commercial, industrial, medical, engineering, governmental, cultural and social pursuits that nation-building requires, Palestinian leaders have inculcated, revelled in and glorified a national self-identity as perpetual victims. In a sense, they have deformed their people's inherent goodness, drive and dynamism and created instead a deep, structural pathology that celebrates murderers, lionizes killers and kidnappers, and regards the annihilation of another people – Israel – as virtuous.

Propaganda, however, is evanescent. It changes as rapidly as the headlines atop a news story. But the need for a reliably strong and manifestly good national character transcends time. It is the foundation on which a prosperous, caring society must be built.

For their colossal disregard of what truly counts in a national psyche and ethos, Palestinian leaders will one day be seen as history's worst serial abusers of their own people. ■

Rules with teeth in the fight against corruption

Rabbi Jay Kelman

The last 50 years have seen major shifts in defining the ethical. While this is especially true in the realm of sexuality, there have been great shifts in the economics sphere, much of it positive. We no longer have sweatshops, workplaces must meet minimum safety requirements, and we have minimum wages and employment insurance. And whatever one's view of unions, there's no doubt they did much to improve the lot of workers at a time when they were often taken advantage of.

However, many of these improvements have yet to occur in many countries around the world, where corruption of all kinds is all too often the price of doing business. Companies operating in these locales are, sadly, often forced to choose between good business and good morals.

In order to combat the incentive for corruption, Ottawa recently passed rules that prohibit the awarding of any public contracts for 10 years to any company that has been convicted of a crime such as bribery. "The government of Canada has an obligation to ensure that it is doing business with ethical suppliers, especially in the increasingly global marketplace," a Public Works spokesperson said.

Three objections have been raised by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. These business leaders argue that Canadians will suffer, since if corporations are barred from bidding on projects, there will be less competition, higher prices and possibly lower quality work; that the firms affected will be forced to lay off workers; and that there's no mechanism to clear firms that have fired perpetrators and set up systems to ensure violations don't happen again – they'll still be barred from public contracts for 10 years.

Each argument has a certain logic and truth to it, but I'd like to respond and defend these policies, which send a very clear and important moral message.

While there may be some impact on competition and pricing, in Canada the impact will be marginal at best. There should be no lack of firms without convictions offering their services. More importantly, morality comes at a cost. If there were no material benefit to engaging in illegal and corrupt behaviour, no one would do so. To reject high moral standards because it might cost money is just another way of saying money should trump morals. I'm on the side of morals.

The fact that innocent employees may suffer for the misdeeds of others is absolutely true. It's sad, but not really relevant. When you work at a firm, much of your success is tied to the success of others. That's the nature of business, and the fact you must pay the price for the failings of colleagues is part of what it means to work with others.

My last job as an accountant was at Arthur Andersen. That firm no longer exists, because a few corrupt individuals in the Houston office bungled the Enron file. It's sad and quite unfair that partners around the world suffered greatly for the actions of a few. But you can't have it both ways. When companies expand and operate around the world, each local branch reaps the benefits of being associated with an international firm. Earned or not, people assume a certain degree of professionalism, expert resources and innovation from such a firm – again, much of it unrelated to the local office.

The third claim that there is no mechanism for clearing a company regardless of new policies it puts in place is the most compelling. While one might quibble with the details, if the law is to have any teeth, harsh punishments must be given.

The easiest way to avoid such penalties is to enact rules before corruption happens and to ensure better screening of potential hires and better oversight of all employees. The federal government is to be commended for introducing rules with teeth in the battle against corruption. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Why we must remember Jews from Arab lands

Norma Baumel Joseph

I'm writing this column on Nov. 30, the day declared to be the national day commemorating the plight of Jews from Arab lands. Most left their home countries after the creation of the State of Israel, emigrating in the 1950s. What took so long? Why now? What's at stake here?

The Israeli government is calling this National Refugee Day. But were these Jews really refugees? Many never wanted to be called or grouped in the category "refugee." They had arrived home to Israel or to new countries that would become home. They never wanted to go back to those Middle Eastern countries. They didn't want to be linked with other refugees. They'd made new lives for themselves, rigorously promoting adjustments and success, relying on family and friends, not handouts. These were proud Jews whose heritage confirmed their individual and communal strength.

But now we find many willing to add their numbers to the grand refugee claimants' list. Why?

Going back in time, we can understand their reticence to be linked with other Middle Eastern refugees. It soon became a political designation and one of shame. The Jews from Iraq that I know are proud, and rightly so. They came to Montreal with little or nothing. They were expelled or pushed out of a country that had been home for 2,500 years. They spoke with love about their land. No one wanted to remember or dwell on the bad times. What good would it do? Why fill their children with frightening tales?

So they always spoke of the good times, of the food and way of life. They spoke in Arabic with a nostalgia that didn't include a longing to return. They were finished with Iraq, but not their heritage. But they were most definitely not victims, not refugees!

Moreover, stories of genocide and trauma take time to be told. It takes time to get the message out. People were busy establishing themselves, and what was the purpose? Perhaps it takes a generation or two for stories to surface, for horrors to be acknowledged and shared openly. Some stories may even be told early on, but that's no guarantee they're heard.

In Israel, research and writing started sooner, as Ashkenazi Israelis needed to accommodate the Middle Eastern Jews in their midst. But in general, the Jewish world wasn't ready to hear about the tribulations of Jews from Arab lands. In the 1950s, the world was too full of Holocaust stories, and who could compete with that suffering? So Middle Eastern Jews were silenced by their own habits and by the rest of the Jewish world. Ignorance and indifference prevailed.

But about a decade ago, stories started being publicized in Jewish communal venues. This was natural. There were shifts in approaches to cultural heritage. A whole genre of people, scholars and communal participants, searching for their own cultural heritage came forth. No longer trying just to blend in, people wanted to know their past. The current popularity of ethnic studies, memoirs, genealogy searches and oral history has its origins in this quest. As a result, many terror memoirs were generated by the demands of scholarship, justice and ethnic pride. However, the initial impulse of the survivor toward public invisibility and silence remained strong

But then political pressure was added. The government of Israel realized that while Palestinian refugees claimed a right of return, their numbers and claims could be balanced or countered by Jews from Arab lands. It became a numbers game. Estimates range from 600,000 to 950,000, just enough to counteract or offset Palestinian claims.

Can the Palestinian Nakba be countered with the Iraqi Farhoud? But is this a competition or a deserved claim for justice, recognition and accurate history?

Given our strong commitment to *zachor* (remember), we must commemorate, celebrate, listen and preserve these stories. They comprise our combined history and heritage, and we're all richer for it. ■

News

Concordia president swiftly denounces pro-BDS vote

JANICE ARNOLD
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Concordia University president Alan Shepard has denounced academic boycotts in principle in the wake of undergraduates at his school narrowly voting in favour of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

The results of the referendum, part of the Concordia Student Union (CSU) byelections, were made known on Friday evening, Dec. 5, more than a week after polls closed.

Reiterating that the result of the vote is independent of the university, Shepard stated immediately after the tally was in: "In my view, a boycott barring us from contact with other universities and scholars would be contrary to the value of academic freedom that is a pillar of Concordia and of universities all over the world.

"That freedom – to think the thoughts we want to think, to test ideas however controversial – is the bedrock of university life. Boycotts by definition foreclose all opportunities for such a free exchange of ideas and perspectives."

He called on discussion surrounding this "complex, controversial and emotional" issue to be conducted in an atmosphere of free speech and mutual respect.

"I have heard from a number of members of our community who worry that this issue is divisive and could create an unwelcoming environment on campus," he said. "I call on everyone in the Concordia community to work together to sustain an environment in which all of us are emotionally and physical safe and secure."

To the question "Do you approve of the CSU endorsing the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel?" the final count was 1,276 in favour, 1,067 against, and 237 abstentions or spoiled ballots. The byelection/referendum, held from Nov. 25 to 27, was open to Concordia's more than 36,000 undergraduates.

In January 2013, the Concordia Graduate Students Association passed a pro-BDS resolution at its general assembly. Its membership is about 8,000.

Jewish undergraduate Shelly Kubik said the No committee, which she chairs, is considering its options, including challenging the results. It has concerns about reports of infractions during the voting period.

In a Dec. 6 article in the *Prince Arthur Herald*, an online student newspaper, Kubik wrote that tension is high on campus over the BDS issue and some comments against members of the No committee on social media have been "openly anti-Semitic and hateful," and crude graffiti about Jews has been found in washrooms.

"The BDS motion will not simplify the issues on campus, but it will endorse and nurture that hate and tension that marked its presence on campus in recent weeks," Kubik wrote. "The win of the BDS is a great loss for our freedom, safety, acceptance and diversity on campus."

The No committee estimates there are about 1,000 Jewish students at Concordia.

The No committee will contest a $150 fine levied against it by CSU chief electoral officer André-Marcel Baril for alleged violations during the campaign. The student newspaper the *Concordian* reported that until Baril's report is released, what those violations are won't be publicized. A new committee, open to both sides, from inside and outside the university, is expected to be formed to decide how to proceed.

Yes committee chair Javier Hoyos told the *Concordian* his team plans to spend the rest of the year gathering "empirical evidence showing institutions and certain products are complicit in the occupation of Palestinian territories" in order to persuade the CSU to implement a BDS policy by next fall.

The No committee succeeded on the evening before the polls opened in having the CSU judicial board agree to simplify the question by dropping the clause "until Israel complies with international law and universal principles of human rights." BDS opponents believed this would make the question less prejudicial.

The byelections/referendum took place after two weeks of vigorous campaigning, with both sides accusing the other of violations and lodged complaints with Baril.

The BDS question was the only one of eight put to the undergraduates that did not directly relate to student affairs.

Late on the final voting day, Nov. 27, Baril made the surprise decision to have the ballots cast on the BDS question sealed and left uncounted until an outside firm specializing in matters like this could be consulted.

In the end, after a reported one-hour consultation with the firm, the votes were counted by five CSU members, overseen by Baril, with representatives of the Yes and No committees present.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) stated: "We are concerned with the climate of division created by this referendum, but we are confident that the university administration will not only stand up for what is right, but take appropriate measures and follow up on threats, harassment and bullying by some pro-BDS students… [Shepard's statement] highlights for us the administration's commitment not to have university policy dictated by a radical student union decision."

Alan Shepard.

The close vote, CIJA said, "demonstrates that those who seek to divide do not have a majority and do not represent the thousands of students on campus who did not vote."

StandWithUs Canada, a Toronto-based pro-Israel organization working on campuses, said it's "disappointed, but not surprised" by the vote and welcomed Shepard's "unambiguous and bold" statement. "What is particularly disturbing is this: when three per cent of a university student union makes a decision for 36,460 undergraduate students at Concordia, there is no hint of the majority ruling in this 'vote,'" said executive director Meryle Kates.

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies also decried the vote. ■

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Yossi Klein Halevi recalls his extremist youth

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

American-born Israeli journalist Yossi Klein Halevi is highly regarded for his insightful commentary on politics and culture in Israel. He has written for the *Jerusalem Report* magazine and penned articles on the Middle East for a variety of North American and Israeli publications. A senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, he's the author of the 2001 book *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for God with Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land*. His latest book, *Like Dreamers: The Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, won the Jewish book of the Year Award in 2013. His first book, *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist*, has been re-released. He spoke to *The CJN* during a recent visit to Toronto.

Why re-release *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist*?

Let me give you a bit of background about the strange trajectory of the book. I began writing it when I was 19 in 1972. I was very much immersed at the time in Jewish extremism, with the Jewish Defence League,

The Israeli author has re-released his memoirs.

[Rabbi] Meir Kahane, the violent wing of the Soviet Jewry protest movement. And I started writing this book as a way to defend Jewish militancy. Fortunately, I put it aside and didn't finish it in my youth. I came back to the book in my 30s, and the book that emerged was the exact opposite of what I intended it to be, which was a repudiation of Jewish extremism.

The book came out on Nov. 6, 1995, two days after the Rabin assassination.

The book was very widely reviewed, but almost no one bought it. No one wanted to be seen walking into a bookstore and buying a book called *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist* at that moment.

So the book died.

When I published *Like Dreamers* last year, my publisher, Harper Collins, said why don't we publish your first book.

How is it relevant today?

It's coming out at a particularly appropriate moment, when many Jews are asking themselves what is our relationship with the international community. Israel is increasingly isolated. Jews in Europe are being subjected to the worst forms of anti-Semitism since the Shoah.

The Jewish People today are divided between two anxieties. One anxiety is for the physical safety of Israel and of parts of the Diaspora. Another anxiety is for the soul of Israel and the consequences of an ongoing occupation of another people. And I embrace both of these anxieties at the same time.

So for me this book tells the story how one angry young Jew went from being a one-dimensional Jew capable of only relating to one form of threat to Judaism, the physical threat of anti-Semitism, to a Jew who is struggling with the ongoing challenge of complexity.

Was this a gradual evolution or was there an incident that led you to give up the way of violence?

Very much a gradual evolution. The deeper process this book describes is not just a break from extremism. The deeper story being told here is the question of how we perceive our place in the world. A Jewish extremist believes we have no friends, no allies in the non-Jewish world. Everybody hates us, and I was taught that by my father, a Holocaust survivor from Hungary.

The sense of radical aloneness in the world is the soil from which extremism grows. An extremist divides the world into two categories: those that actively want to harm my people and those who couldn't care less. Everyone, to some extent, is implicated in my people's suffering. And that's what enables an idealist to place a bomb in a public place.

Did you engage in violence?

Yeah.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 70

Wishing you and your family
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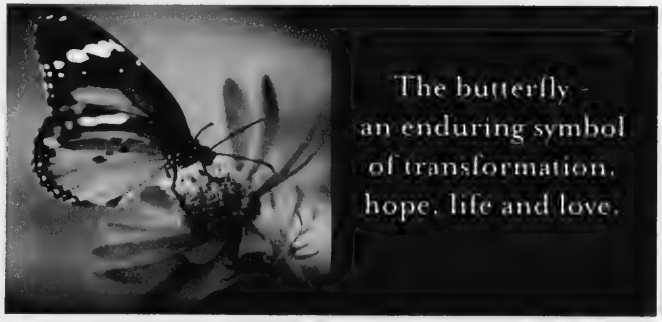

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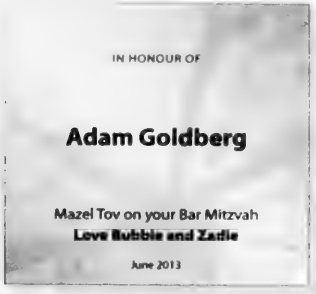

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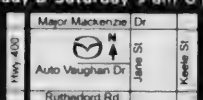


Local Arabic newspaper praises Har Nof shul massacre

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A local Arab-language newspaper's praising of the synagogue massacre in the Har Nof neighbourhood of Jerusalem, in which four rabbis and a police officer were murdered, is "disgusting, obscene, disgraceful [and] possibly criminal," says the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Writing in the Nov. 28 edition of *Meshwar*, a free newspaper circulated in southwest Ontario, editor Nazih Khatatba approved the Nov. 18 Har Nof massacre as a "courageous and qualitative" operation.

The attack "ushers a new phase which should properly be called the phase of the new Fedayeen, fighters who sacrifice their life in battle," wrote Khatatba, who is also a board member of Palestine House in Mississauga.

An English translation of Khatatba's editorial, entitled "al-Quds [Jerusalem] operation and the quiet intifadah," was provided to CIJA by Jonathan Halevi, a Toronto-based researcher at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and a former advisor to Israel's foreign affairs ministry.

CIJA said it verified the translation.

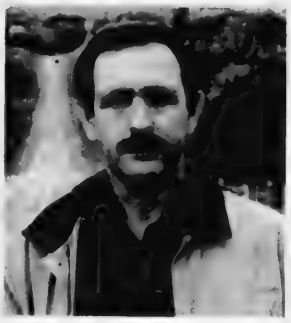
"The activities of the occupation in al-Quds [Jerusalem] and Al-Aqsa [Mosque] in particular, and in the other Palestinian territories in general, during a long period of time posed the Palestinians only one option, which is initiating an attack with several innovated tactics culminated in the courageous and qualitative Al-Quds operation, which was carried out on Tuesday [Nov. 18, 2014] by two Palestinians in a Jewish synagogue," Khatatba wrote.

Khatatba is "clearly an anti-Semite," Berl Nadler, CIJA's Greater Toronto co-chair, told *The CJN*.

"When you extol the virtues of killing innocent Jews at prayer, you're basically telling people it's a good thing for Arabs or Palestinians to kill innocent Jews. [It's] sick and not something that should be tolerated by civilized society," Nadler said.

He said CIJA "is looking into" laying a criminal complaint with police over the Har Nof editorial.

Nadler said *Meshwar* and Khatatba are already the subjects of a police complaint filed by CIJA in August over an editorial in the paper that denied the Holocaust.



Nazih Khatatba
FACEBOOK PHOTO

> *[It's] sick and not something that should be tolerated by civilized society*
>
> **Berl Nadler**
> **CIJA's Greater Toronto co-chair**

Though not written by Khatatba himself, the piece referred to the "Holohoax" as "the biggest lie in history."

The article was accompanied by a cartoon depicting an Orthodox Jew driving a car whose steering wheel was the emblem of the United Nations. The transmission stick bore the face of U.S. President Barack Obama.

Nadler said the editorial lauding the Har Nof massacre was "even worse."

Readers of *Meshwar* "are Canadian. What is this telling his readers? Is he trying to incite them to do the same thing?"

Last month, Khatatba wrote an editorial justifying the attacks that killed six Israelis, including a three-year-old infant, in incidents involving stabbing and vehicles used as weapons.

In July, the paper said Toronto police prevented "a massacre" from taking place at Palestine House, where members of the Jewish Defence League staged a vigil and protest following the murders of three yeshiva students in Israel.

Last February, the paper asked why Palestinians "should accept [the Holocaust] as truth."

Among many articles vilifying Israel, *Meshwar* has depicted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with blood trickling from his mouth, standing over a bloodied child, with the caption, "Save Palestinians Kids."

The bi-weekly newspaper is published by Meshwar Media Printing & Signs, a "discount" advertising and printing broker in Toronto, according to an archived web search. The company prints brochures, flyers, calendars, signs and other materials.

The newspaper reaches 4,000 readers in Ontario, the website stated.

"I don't want to speak to you," Khatatba said when reached by *The CJN*. "Is that my right?"

His LinkedIn profile says he was a "director" of the Palestinian Authority from 1994 to 2002. Khatatba's Facebook page says he is from Nablus and studied modern history at the "Russian Academy of Sciences."

Meshwar and Khatatba have often registered on the radar of Honest Reporting Canada, a media monitoring group.

Halevi told *The CJN* he has documented evidence of senior officials of Palestine House calling for violence against Israelis.

"When they say Israelis, they're talking only about Jews."

The paper's views on Israel raise "important questions of freedom of speech versus incitement to violence," Halevi acknowledged, but "they crossed the line in this case."

He said Palestine House has been "silent" on the published statements. "This silence is tantamount to approval," he said.

In 2012, the federal government defunded Palestine House for its "pattern of support for extremism." In its final year of government funding, it received nearly $1 million for settlement services and language programs.

Calls to Palestine House were not returned. ■

COR asking OLRB to rule on mashgichim's overtime

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Richard Rabkin

The Kashruth Council of Canada, also known as COR, is asking the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to overturn a Ministry of Labour compliance order requiring it to pay its mashgichim overtime.

The compliance order came after an inspection of COR's operating practices. It found that in some cases COR paid its mashgichim more than required by law, but "there were numerous instances in which employees worked well in excess of 44 hours a week and were not paid overtime pay, by operation of the employer's policy."

The Kashruth Council, which certifies kosher products under the COR logo, is asking the OLRB to review that finding. It is relying on a June 2013 OLRB decision that supported COR's position on overtime, stated an email from Richard Rabkin, managing director of COR.

"COR is committed to compliance with all statutory requirements on payment of its staff, including mashgichim," Rabkin wrote. "The Kashruth Council provides for overtime that is more generous than the provisions of the Employment Standards Act (ESA) to the extent that if a mashgiach works more than 10 consecutive hours on a job, he or she will be entitled to overtime pay. In contrast, the ESA requires that overtime be paid at a rate of time and a half for hours in excess of 44 hours per week."

On March 5, an employment standards officer of the Ministry of Labour issued a compliance order that came after an inspection of COR premises and an audit of its practices. The officer found several violations of provisions in the ESA, including record-keeping for vacation time; hours of work provisions, involving excess daily and weekly hours and rest between shifts; failure to have written agreements in place with employees who work on public holidays; and contravention of the vacation pay and vacation time provisions of the ESA.

"Our view is that our practices are consistent with statutory requirements," Rabkin stated. That assessment was confirmed by Ministry of Labour spokesperson William Lin, who said, "the employer has complied with the other standards."

The officer visited COR premises in November 2013 and reported that the organization employs approximately 50 people, including office staff, co-ordinators, administrators and mashgichim. COR also draws upon a pool of 146 other employees when needed.

(In its filings to the Canada Revenue Agency, COR reported in 2013 that it had 37 full-time employees, had no part-time staff and had no expenses for part-time workers.)

The employment standards officer's *Reasons for Decision* focused only on provisions relating to the mashgichim, who inspect food processes at remote locations to determine whether they comply with standards of kashrut.

An OLRB hearing next month will address the overtime and hours worked aspects of the compliance order, Lin said.

In appealing the order's provision on overtime, COR is relying on the June 2013 OLRB decision, which ruled mashgichim are supervisory personnel and as such, the ESA's provisions on overtime and limits on hours of work don't apply to them.

However, the employment standards officer considered the earlier judgment and concluded "the OLRB's decision is not binding. However, even if it were, it is open to me to find that the supervisory/managerial exemption does not apply, in light of the fact that the board's decision was based on the uncontradicted evidence of the employer.

"I am of the view, based on the best available evidence, that the role of the mashgichim is not supervisory in character, as they primarily supervise processes, not people," she concluded.

Rabkin stated that despite COR's belief that the mashgichim are exempt from provision of the ESA, "we have decided to go above and beyond our statutory requirements and pay overtime nonetheless," he said. The OLRB's June 2013 decision found that COR's practice "was a 'greater right or benefit' than that provided by the ESA and was an appropriate measure of compensation."

"We are confident that our pay practices will stand up to statutory and judicial scrutiny. Our mashgichim prefer this method of payment, which is why we compensate them in this manner," Rabkin stated. The case will be heard on Jan. 6 in Toronto. ■

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Wynne headlines new Har Zion speaker series

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About 200 people gathered at Temple Har Zion in Thornhill to hear from Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, who shared her vision on how her government plans to tackle key issues including poverty, transit, the plight of aboriginals, victims of sexual assault and the $10.5 billion- deficit.

"The problems I'm trying to solve now, are how we're going to get around this city for the next 25 years," said Wynne, who was invited to be the keynote speaker for the inaugural President's Circle Speakers Series.

"We have to deal with the fact that only 40 per cent of aboriginal kids graduate high school... How are we going to deal with the fact that we've got laws and protocols around sexual assault and they are clearly not working well enough," she said in an address, before sitting down for a one-on-one with Har Zion's founding president, Philip Epstein.

"We've also got a deficit in this province and I know we've got to deal with that. We've got to eliminate the deficit and we've got to get our books in order, but I'm not going to do that on the backs of the poorest in our society."

She talked about her government's poverty reduction strategy, which aims to eradicate poverty entirely. Part of that plan is to increase wages for personal support workers and early child educators and for "people whose wages have not changed over the last decade, who are doing work that is essential to the well-being of the community."

She said when it comes to the issues facing the aboriginal community, she said "the relationship that we have with aboriginal people is one that has been fraught for literally hundreds of years and we have not addressed it in a way that I think is adequate."

She said that one only need to look at the living conditions on reserves and acknowledge the fact that there are about 4,500 missing or murdered aboriginal women to understand how dire the situation is.

"We grieved the deaths yesterday of the 14 women who were killed at École Polytechnique in Montreal 25 years ago, but there are thousands of aboriginal women who we don't know about and we do not talk about in our society."

She spoke about the fact that since the story broke about the claims of sexual assault against former CBC radio host Jian Gomeshi, people have been reacting to the topic as if it is a new phenomenon.

Premier Kathleen Wynne speaking at Temple Har Zion Dec. 7.

"If you fill a room with women, most of those women are going to have had some experience, certainly of discrimination, probably of harassment and a lot of them, sexual assault."

She said many women who have been assaulted never reported it because they didn't feel it is safe to do so.

"My response in government is that we have to do something about that. We have to go the next step because we're not doing enough and we've got to do more."

Speaking about the deficit, Wynne said that having "a better partner in the federal government," would help, a statement that elicited laughter from the crowd.

"I believe that with the surplus that the federal government has right now, they're going to be able to put in place some tax cuts because they've got a surplus, but I believe there are other things we could do with it. I believe that they could balance their budget and not give more tax cuts and spend some of that money on an annual basis on the issues that I've identified," she said.

When Epstein asked Wynne where the money would come from to pay for the programs and infrastructure the province needs, she said, "we are raising income tax on the highest income earners in our province.... We are looking at our assets, whether it is Hydro One, the LCBO, OPG, [Ontario Power Generation] ... looking at how to maintain the revenue flow into the province and increase it in some areas... We've put together a plan that will give us $29 billion over the next 10 years." ■

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In the heart of Bloor-Yorkville

Darchei Noam, JSpace host frank talk with Israeli envoy

JODIE SHUPAC
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From left, Darchei Noam member Shirley Segev, moderator Ralph Benmergui, Israeli consul general to Toronto and Western Canada DJ Schneeweiss and JSpace member Hart Schwartz.

A conversation between moderator Ralph Benmergui, Canadian radio and television personality turned political advisor, and DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general to Toronto and Western Canada, was occasionally tense at an event held at Congregation Darchei Noam Dec. 3, co-hosted by the Reconstructionist synagogue and the progressive Jewish organization JSpaceCanada.

Billed as an interactive evening of open and honest discussion with Schneeweiss, participants – most of whom were affiliated with Darchei Noam or JSpace – observed an interview with Schneeweiss, conducted by Benmergui, and joined by JSpace member Hart Schwartz and Darchei Noam member Shirley Segev. They then had the opportunity to ask their own questions of the envoy.

Several times, Benmergui asked Schneeweiss if he could look at the conflict from the Palestinian perspective, and Schneeweiss initially stated he could, saying, "The Palestinians are convinced we don't have a desire for peace, that they'll get more out of the international community than with dealing with Israel itself."

But Benmergui charged this still constituted "looking at things from an Israeli lens."

"Fine, I could say that Israel is a colonial enterprise, et cetera," Schneeweiss retorted. "I don't want to go on, because I don't want to be quoted as saying this."

Benmergui said the Jewish People "have had to decide not just to be a defensive people, but an offensive people, in order to protect the state we've established," and he asked Schneeweiss about the effect this is having on the "soul of Judaism."

Schneeweiss said Israel defending itself as a nation, like other western countries does not undermine "the inherent good of our religion."

Schwartz asked Schneeweiss if he saw, in the near future, the Israeli government freezing or curtailing "the destructive policy of settlement building."

Schneeweiss responded that, though settlement-building has "become a sort of touchstone of whether Israel is for or against peace [with the Palestinians]," many Israelis don't view this as the defining element of establishing peace and consider "other dimensions as having equal impact, such as that of Israel's security."

He continued: "An argument that runs through the Israeli body politic is, 'We left Lebanon and got rockets raining down from the north, we left Gaza and got rockets from the south, and now you want us to leave the West Bank?'"

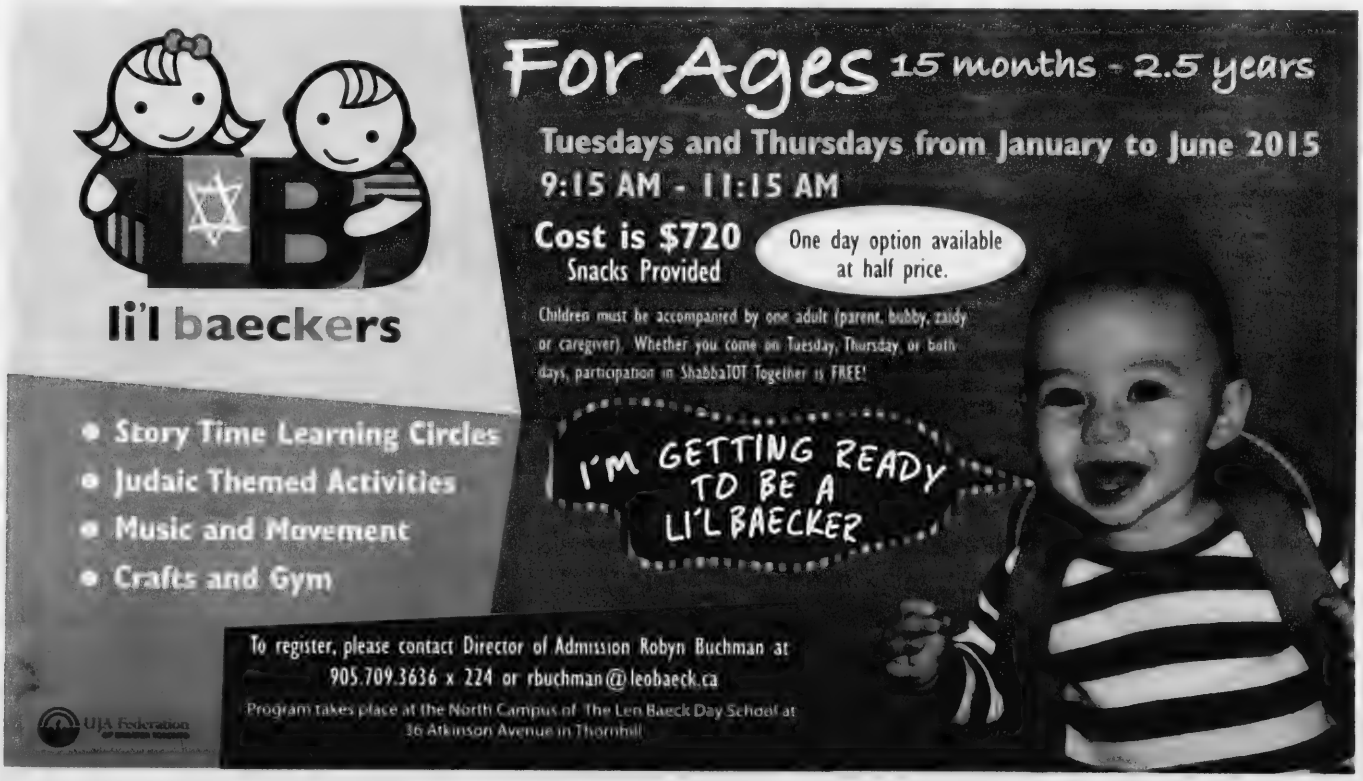
Perception is crucial, he said, noting there is a substantial gulf between how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is regarded inside and outside the country.

He argued that settlement policies are often highly politically driven, entwined with the complexities of managing an Israeli coalition government.

Asked by an audience member how Diaspora Jews can trust what they read in the news about Israel, Schneeweiss said: "I suggest supplementing news sources. If you just read Canadian news, supplement it with Israeli news, but also, don't just read *Ha'aretz*. Read different points of view."

Benmergui interjected: "Read the Arab and Palestinian press… part of our Jewish experience is to love the other, the stranger."

The conversation ended with Schneeweiss saying: "We're not perfect. We're flawed and riven with rivalries. But it doesn't mean that the project itself is unworthy… To do the project… we have to be able to protect ourselves. A lot of people in the West nowadays think you can get freedom without standing up for what you believe in, but sometimes you have to… Israel isn't a painting we can hang and admire from afar. We each have a role to play in making it what it needs to be. The fact it's not there yet isn't a failure, but just means it's a work in progress." ■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TED-talks face gripping issues

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Shaarei Shomayim Congregation's Rabbi Chaim Strauchler hopes a new initiative to present short, gripping, TED-Talk-like lectures by North American rabbis will inspire the next generation of Jews to view world issues through a Jewish lens.

In October, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) launched a series of rabbinical lectures, modelled after the TED (Technology Entertainment and Design) conference, a popular conference where the presentations are recorded and made available for free online.

"The idea is to create communication vehicles for great Torah messages and make use of modern technology, modern media and social media," said Rabbi Strauchler, who chaired the 2014 RCA conference last summer and produced the online lecture series that is available on a YouTube channel called R3CA.

"I think very often, rabbis are not fully aware of their potential as public thought leaders and this effort is meant to, number 1, teach people and give them experiences of what they are going to find exciting and inspiring and it is also meant to help rabbis reconceive their roles, both to their own community and also to the wider community."

Of the 10 lectures that are being released monthly, three are currently available on YouTube: Connecticut-based Rabbi Daniel Cohen's lecture titled "Living a life of legacy: Discovering your Elijah moment; a lecture by Rabbi Mark Fishman, from Montreal's Congregation Beth Tikvah, titled "Sex trafficking and the synagogue: Raising the engagement of our young adults;" and another by Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, from Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem in Montreal, called "Holocaust survivors' secret to happiness."

"Rabbi Steinmetz' piece is about Holocaust survivors, and it is extremely inspiring because he is a child of Holocaust survivors, and you listen to it and get a sense that this person is really engaged in this issue, that he has something to teach me," Rabbi Strauchler said.

The lecture about sex trafficking by Rabbi Fishman was inspired by a personal challenge he faced in his community about how to engage the children of his older members who were not attending shul regularly.

"What he found, was for that generation, what people really wanted to do, was not necessarily focus on the particular elements of Judaism, but on the universal, and he found that if you engage them, the desire to care for the problems of the world, that are not necessarily Jewish issues, they can relate to them as Jews together," Rabbi Strauchler said.

"So he took a trip with members of his congregation to Thailand to focus on some of the issues of sex trafficking and they did it as a young community within a shul to address that issue."

The goal of this project will be to gain 100,000 views for these 10 videos, each under 18 minutes in length, over the course of a year.

Rabbi Strauchler said another goal of the project is to widely share messages that "emerge from our Torah tradition that can help people live their lives in a better way," and to inspire the rabbis themselves.

"I want rabbis to speak about whatever they are inspired by. To inspire others you have to inspire yourself. Every rabbi has their song that makes them sing and I want them to sing that song. I want something that is going to be passionate and inspiring."

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

And he is relying on members of the rabbis' congregations to help spread the messages to their social circles.

"With social technology right now, social media, you can just throw this onto your Facebook page, forward it to your contact list and say, 'Hey, this is a great inspiring presentation that my rabbi did, you have to watch it,'" Rabbi Strauchler said.

"That type of interaction even further solidifies the learning experience, because you're not just learning by yourself in front of your machine, you're talking about it with a friend afterwards."■

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GUEST VOICE

Jean Béliveau: a mensch to the end

David Lazarus

Even though I have glanced at only the occasional pro hockey game since the first National Hockey League expansion in 1967, I would have been among the first to help lower the flag to half-staff when Jean Béliveau died Dec. 3.

Béliveau's retirement from the Montreal Canadiens in 1971, in fact, was one of the reasons I gave up watching pro hockey, which has since seemed to succumb completely to cynicism. It's all about money and how much owners and athletes make, and about players who don't try hard enough or care enough.

Maybe it was always about money for the owners, but decades ago, it wasn't always like that for the guys shooting the pucks or stopping them.

Béliveau, Le Gros Bill, number 4, winner of 10 Stanley Cups and millions of hearts, cared.

He loved hockey to the core of his being, but he was always wise enough to know what really mattered in life, even when he was starting out as a young, strapping, charismatic team leader.

For Béliveau, hockey was never as important as family, friends and fans, which of course made him the greatest ambassador the game has ever had and simply wise as a human being.

He always made sure his signed autographs were legible and neat. He never declined to sign one, or pose for pictures with a fan, whether they were aged nine or 90. His life was devoted to family, children and hockey, in that exact descending order.

So we should avoid the words that seem so inevitably attached to this handsome and hulking figure, like "class," "gentleman," and "legend."

In 2008, Béliveau signs his umpteenth autograph at the Yaldei Developmental Centre.

They're all true, but they've been overused to the point of meaninglessness.

How about this one: mensch?

For three decades, Béliveau in many ways was one of Israel's and the Jewish community's most ardent ambassadors, supporters, and admirers.

That began in 1984, when at the prompting of community leader Gordon Brown, Béliveau was approached by then-Maccabi Canada president Gary Ulrich, a Montreal businessman in the shmatte business, to serve as Canada's honorary chef de mission at the 1985 Maccabiah Games, the first non-Jew to do so.

Béliveau jumped at the chance, recalled Ulrich, a very, very close friend whose sense of loss last week ran deep.

"He said yes even before consulting with [his wife] Elise," Ulrich remembered. "Jean told me that he always missed the chance to compete for the [1972] Canada Cup. He felt this would be his chance to represent Canada once again."

My own voice trembled when as a (much) younger *CJN* sports columnist, I called up Béliveau to write the story about him going to the Games. He was cordial and polite to a fault, as I would come to learn he always was. Always. That was Béliveau. He often described leading the Canadian team into Ramat Gan stadium that year for the opening ceremonies as one of the highlights of his life, and I know this was true, since I heard him say so myself.

That trip also led to his close and abiding friendship with Maccabi Canada and the Jewish community that only grew more steadfast over time.

In 1996, Maccabi Canada gave Béliveau a lavish tribute dinner to help raise funds for the 1997 Maccabiah, when Béliveau went to Israel again as honorary chef de mission. Unfortunately, that was the same year as the tragic bridge collapse, which cast a pall on the Games.

In later years, despite increasing health issues, Béliveau still (almost) never said no. In 2008, he visited a Jewish centre for autistic children to help dedicate an ambulance, as usual signing countless autographs. The same year, he became the first non-Jewish inductee into the Montreal YM-YWHA's Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, witnessed personally by other hockey gods such as Bobby Hull, Gordie Howe and Yvon Cournoyer.

In 2011, Maccabi Canada stalwarts rallied around him again while he recuperated from serious illness, and a year later, Béliveau showed up personally at corporate headquarters to sign a painting of Beliveau's hockey sweater owned by Aldo Bensadoun, owner of the Aldo's Shoes chain.

Even in 2013, Béliveau, by then not really able to appear publicly anymore, recorded a video tribute to another Maccabi Canada friend, Roy Salomon, for a Jewish community sports celebrity breakfast.

That was Béliveau. A mensch to the end.

Ulrich recounted that while he visited him at his Longueuil home regularly in the months up to his death, Béliveau, although bedridden, still managed to smile and briefly clasp a hand or exchange some words.

And while not unexpected, Béliveau's death still came too soon.

"I was supposed to go to his house today," Ulrich said Dec. 3. "I feel like I've lost a member of my own family. My heart is broken." ■

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BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

Lawyer countersues ex-client accusing him of negligence

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It looks like businessman Nathan Jacobson and lawyer Steven Skurka have not had enough of each other.

On Nov. 26, Skurka filed court documents in response to a statement of claim issued by Jacobson earlier this year.

Jacobson is suing Skurka, a contributor to *The CJN*, for more than $32 million over allegations of "ineffective" and "negligent" legal representation. Skurka served as Jacobson's lead counsel in a U.S. case in which the Toronto-based businessman was charged with money laundering in connection to an Internet pharmacy business.

Jacobson says he always maintained his innocence. He alleges he pleaded guilty after being advised to do so by Skurka. Jacobson spent about a month in jail in Canada and another 44 days in jail in the United States before a U.S. District Court in California last July withdrew his conviction and guilty plea.

Jacobson is suing Skurka for the $1.7 million in legal fees he paid him, $4.5 million for civil forfeiture to American

Nathan Jacobson

Steven Skurka

authorities, approximately $1.66 million he paid his U.S. legal team, who represented him in rescinding his conviction, special damages in the amount of $10 million for lost income and lost business opportunities, general damages of $10 million, aggravated damages of $3.5 million and punitive damages of $1 million.

"Mr. Jacobson states that the plea of guilty to a serious felony, the payment of a fine in the amount of U.S. $4,500,000, the loss of reputation, the travel restrictions arising out of a felony conviction, the loss of business and the unconscionable payment to the defendant Skurka in the amount of almost $1,700,000 all arose and was directly caused by the negligence and breach of express and implied contractual obligations of the defendant Skurka," Jacobson's statement of claim alleges.

His court documents also allege that "Skurka knew or ought to have known that the United States government could not prove that Mr. Jacobson was guilty of the various criminal charges yet advised Mr. Jacobson to plead guilty."

Skurka rejected the allegations in his statement of defence. He is countersuing Jacobson for $1.8 million, alleging that "Jacobson initiated this action against Skurka for the predominant purposes of attracting favourable media attention for himself and for harming Skurka. In so doing, Jacobson initiated this action against Skurka for the predominant purpose of furthering indirect and collateral objectives."

"The commencement of this action has caused significant damage to Skurka. It has damaged his reputation in the legal community, which was indeed Jacobson's objective. As a result of the commencement of this action against Skurka... Jacobson is liable to Skurka for abuse of process," Skurka's court documents state.

In his statement of defence, Skurka also stated, "Jacobson alone took the voluntary decision to plead guilty."

Jacobson was represented in the run-up to the plea agreement by leading U.S. counsel and his allegations in court documents are "a concoction of deliberate distortions and vicious fabrications," Skurka's statement of defence alleges.

None of the allegations by either party have been proven in court.

Speaking from Moscow, where he was on business, Jacobson said that "the courts in Canada will decide. I look forward eagerly to the proceedings in court."

Toronto lawyer Brian Greenspan, who represented Skurka in California in response to Jacobson's motion there, said: "We're pleased there has finally been an opportunity to fully respond to the claims and allegations that have been made and which, until now, the restrictions of solicitor-client privilege have prevented Mr. Skurka from providing a candid and complete answer to." ■

Doctor decries medical journal's politicization

PAUL LUNGEN
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When psychiatrist Eddy Pakes read the stories and letters in the *Lancet* that slammed Israel, even going so far as to accuse it of war crimes, he was quite upset.

A medical journal is supposed to focus on scientifically based facts and research, not delve into areas of politics beyond its purview, he thought. But what to do about it?

About a month ago, Pakes joined a group of mostly American doctors for a five-day trip to Israel, where they were briefed on a number of issues related to medicine and hospital treatment in Israel, the better able to counter the misrepresentations in the *Lancet* articles.

Now he's back in Toronto and looking forward to briefing members of DARA, Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism, about his trip and discussing ways to counter anti-Israel lies that have appeared in the *Lancet*.

"Doctors are frustrated," Pakes told *The CJN*. "How do we deal with this? There was a sense of impotence about this. That's why we went on the trip."

The trip was organized along with the Israel Medical Association, with programing arranged by Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, CAMERA, Media-Central, NGO-Monitor and Magen David Adom, among others.

Supporters of Israel have been critical of a number of articles that have run in the *Lancet*, a British-based journal on medical issues, going back to 2007. DARA has highlighted several articles over the years which they say unfairly criticize Israel, misrepresent facts, are one-sided and ignore Palestinian suffering at the hands of Arab regimes and their own government.

An open letter in the July 23 issue of the *Lancet* prompted a push-back from those concerned over the politicization of a medical magazine.

In August, DARA sent its supporters an open letter and petition calling for the removal of Richard Horton as editor-in-chief of the journal.

"As scientists, researchers, and medical practitioners, we were shocked and astounded to read the 'Open letter for the people in Gaza.' The article, written by a group of highly biased individuals who falsely claimed to have no conflicts of interest, accused Israel of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The article is rife with political propaganda, is one-sided, and factually inaccurate. It is obvious that this highly biased commentary was not subject to appropriate peer review let alone basic fact checking. This letter should therefore never have been published in the *Lancet*, a medical journal dedicated to intellectual honesty, impartiality, and equal treatment for all peoples."

They go on to accuse Horton of "a long and public history of anti-Israeli views and activism on behalf of various Palestinian causes" and of "the hijacking of a prestigious medical journal in advancement of a personal political agenda."

In October, Horton visited Israel, spending three days at Haifa's Rambam Medical Centre. He reportedly called his visit "a turning point for me and my relationship with this region."

Subsequently, DARA wrote to its supporters saying, "It remains to be seen whether Dr. Horton's exposure to the positive reality of Israeli medicine will modify his apparent anti-Israeli position to the point that he will restore the *Lancet* to a credible medical journal; whether he will apply the standards of objectivity and open declaration of authors' conflicts in selecting articles for publication; whether he will be even-handed in publishing opinion pieces from both sides of the issue when it comes to health care as related to the Arab-Israeli conflict; whether he will stop openly expressing his wish for the elimination of Israel as when he displayed on his personal Twitter page a map substituting Palestine for the State of Israel."

Dr. Eddy Pakes MOISHE FREMAR PHOTO

Pakes doesn't accept Horton's "half apology." He believes the *Lancet* has become politicized, and not in a good way.

The physicians on his recent trip to Israel visited the Ziv Medical Centre in Safed, where doctors treat Syrians wounded in that country's civil war. That's the sort of story that needs to get out, not one promoted in the *Lancet* in which Israelis are supposedly indiscriminately killing civilians, Pakes said.

As for the *Lancet*, he says the issue is "the inappropriate behaviour of a supposedly high level medical journal that's dealing with politics rather than with scientific facts." ■

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Donation funds Har Zion sanctuary renovations

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Debby Kaplan and Jordan Banks
SHELDON DIAMOND PHOTO

Jordan Banks, global head of vertical strategy and managing director of Facebook Canada, was inspired to make a meaningful donation in memory of his late grandparents, Becky and Irvin Shulman, while at the same time honouring his mother, Debby Kaplan.

"Mom is an unbelievable woman. I told her that I wanted to do something meaningful for her," said Banks with pride.

Banks told her that he and his wife, Faith, wanted to make a significant donation to any organization she wanted.

Kaplan chose Temple Har Zion, where she has been a member for more than 30 years and is married to Lawrie Kaplan, a founding member of the 44-year-old congregation.

Banks' donation is supporting the renewal of Har Zion's sanctuary, which was renamed the Debby Kaplan Sanctuary in honour of his mother and in memory of her late parents in a ceremony at Har Zion on Sept. 12.

"I wanted the donation to go someplace that connected our family. We felt this is where the donation would be best used, to enrich and revitalize the existing sanctuary. We wanted to encourage others to feel comfortable in a new environment that was more contemporary than what we presently have," Kaplan said.

"The main focus of the donation became the revitalization of the bimah and Aron Kodesh. The legacy fund, which was established a number of years ago to build a pool of capital funds to ensure the continuity of our congregation, is also a beneficiary of the Banks family's generosity," said Har Zion president Shari Stancer.

Work on the sanctuary is set to begin at the end of June.

Har Zion, a Reform temple, was founded in 1971 and has grown from 72 families housed in rented facilities to its own property located on Bayview Avenue in Thornhill, with a membership today of approximately 550 families.

Kaplan has been a member since 1983 and served as president from 2007 to 2009.

"In Debby's years on the board, and under her leadership as our president, our daytime adult education programming began. We transformed our Hebrew program, our Shabbat task force was reconstituted, and the process of refining our policies on non-Jewish spouses in the synagogue began," said Rabbi Cory Weiss.

"A lot of synagogue presidents go into hiding after their presidencies, but not Debby. After two more years on the executive as immediate past president, Debby moved on to chair our 40th anniversary celebration, and she lent us Lawrie for the year so he could chair our Torah writing project, an accomplishment that gave us our brand new sefer Torah," Rabbi Weiss added.

Kaplan believes her ties to Har Zion are bashert.

"Growing up in Belleville, my parents and I attended the Sons of Jacob Synagogue. While raising my kids, Jordan and Laurie, in Toronto, we used to go back to Belleville for High Holiday services," said Kaplan, a former nurse who went on to teach nursing at Centennial College before retiring in 2006 as dean of continuing education and corporate training.

"I found [Har Zion] before I met my husband, Lawrie [Kaplan]. I found Lawrie through friends and discovered he was very involved in Har Zion. Lawrie was a founding member of Har Zion and was president from the late 1970s to the early 1980s," she said.

"Knowing that my parents live on with the naming of the sanctuary and that they were both here [at Har Zion] before they passed away, they knew how much Har Zion means to me, and they were always proud of the fact that I was very involved, so it holds great meaning," she added.

"I am very proud of Jordan and Faith for setting an example to the next generation. Anyone can give back to their own community at any time. We often think we have to save that until we are older.

"It's a sanctuary that belongs to everybody and we will all love it and enjoy being in it." ■

Jewish studies alive and well, Brandeis prof says

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Even as interest in the humanities dwindles at universities, the number of classes and students in Jewish studies seems to be remaining steady, a renowned professor of American Jewish history says.

In a keynote address at York University on Dec. 7, Brandeis University's Jonathan Sarna said Jewish studies remains quite popular among North American students.

Sarna was in Toronto for a two-day symposium marking the 25th anniversary of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University.

"In the circles in which I mix, I have heard stories of declining enrolments, smaller numbers of majors and minors and fewer employment opportunities," Sarna said, referring to the presumed decline of Jewish studies programs," he said.

"The good news… is that in Jewish studies, the decline is actually selective and much less clear-cut than many of us have imagined."

He cited a 2014 survey done among the hundreds of members of the Association of Jewish Studies. Sarna is the president of the AJS, which represents professors of Jewish studies in all fields.

When asked about the trend in Jewish studies enrolment, only 30 per cent of AJS members cited a decline. On the other hand, 21 per cent asserted there was an increase.

"Jewish studies, comparatively speaking, has actually fared better than many other humanities programs," Sarna said.

Nevertheless, the number of students pursuing humanities degrees in North America dropped by half between 1966 and 2010.

"There are certain areas where we've noticed a bit of a decline," says York professor Carl Ehrlich, director of the Koschitzky Centre. "Others are holding very, very strong."

The centre is the most prominent hub of Jewish studies in Canada. Between 25 and 30 Jewish studies courses are offered at York each year, with some 1,000 students registered in them.

But long before the centre existed, courses on Judaism were being taught at the University of Toronto by Christian professors. In the prewar period, Judaism was studied academically because it was seen as a precursor to Christianity, said York professor emeritus Michael Brown in another keynote address Dec. 7.

At the time, very few of the professors who taught these courses – and almost none of the students in their classes – were Jewish. This lack of representation was largely due to the prejudice against Jews in Canada in that era.

Jonathan Sarna shared some hopeful news about Jewish studies in North America at York University Dec. 7. Sarna was a keynote speaker marking the 25th anniversary of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies.

One factor that draws students to classes with Jewish topics today are enticing course titles, Sarna said. Classes that focus on the Israeli-Arab conflict also remain very popular.

The good news, he added, is that the number of students who major in Jewish studies in graduate school is healthy. Unfortunately, this means there are many people with PhDs looking for jobs that are not available.

"About half of recent North American PhDs in Jewish studies do not hold a tenure-track academic position," he said, referring to recent data.

Among the more hopeful findings in the survey: there is gender equality in the field. Roughly half of all AJS members are women. Meanwhile, around one in six Jewish studies faculty members in North America are not Jewish.

The AJS survey also asked scholars to comment on how the field has changed in recent years. According to the findings Sarna presented, the views are all over the map. Some see Jewish studies as becoming more diverse, while others believe it's more fragmented.

York professor and *CJN* columnist Sara Horowitz, also a past director of the Koschitzky Centre, told *The CJN* that York is a great place to learn about Judaism. The school has a reputation as an interdisciplinary campus, and Jewish studies is represented in a variety of departments and disciplines. For instance, York currently has courses in klezmer music, Israeli cinema and Sephardi studies.

"In order to study texts, civilizations, the lives and values of the Jewish People, it is necessary to look at this [subject] from multiple lenses," Horowitz said. ■

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What really triggered the Maccabean revolt?

JODIE SHUPAC
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The origins of the Chanukah story are highly complex, and conventional Jewish sources don't necessarily capture with full accuracy the events leading up to the Maccabean revolt.

This point was emphasized by Rabbi Lee I. Levine, professor emeritus of Jewish history and archeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in a talk held Dec. 2 at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

"What Triggered the Maccabean Revolt?" was the second in a series of three Chanukah-themed lectures given last week by the visiting Rabbi Levine, who was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

With the holiday on the horizon, Rabbi Levine addressed the Chanukah story's historical lead-up by examining the period between 332 BCE, when Judea was conquered by Alexander the Great, and 165 BCE, when the Hasmonean family led a revolt against the Hellenistic regime in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Levine argued that the Jews of the day may have actually been quite receptive to Hellenism, and that the Maccabees might have revolted not, as we've understood, as a cultural overthrow of Greek culture, but as a political act against the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV.

Palestine was, during Alexander the Great's conquest, at a kind of geographical crossroads between neighbouring nations within the empire, and so, Rabbi Levine said, "Judea became the centre of enormous conflict. A lot of military activity, turmoil, conquering and re-conquering were going on in the area."

Perhaps, then, the Maccabees were fed up with being at the epicentre of political conflict and not, as the typical Jewish day school education teaches, reacting to a climate of religious persecution.

Though conventional accounts suggest that religious oppression of Jews spurred the Maccabean revolt, Rabbi Levine said, it's also possible that the revolt actually preceded, and led to, the Greek authorities' crackdown on Jewish religious practice.

As potential evidence that Jews were allowed to practise religion freely under the Greeks, Rabbi Levine cited a passage from the book of the Maccabees that was written before Antiochus' despoiling of the Temple. It describes citizens of Jerusalem being sent to Tyre (now Lebanon) to attend a games ceremony and being asked to bring money as sacrifices to Hercules, the god of Tyre.

Rabbi Lee I. Levine gave a lecture on the origins of the Chanukah story at Beth Tzedec Congregation Dec. 2. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

The men tasked with bringing this sacrifice, however, were ultimately uncomfortable giving a gift to another god and opted to donate the money to the navy of Tyre.

"This shows that there were certain limits [that the Jews, under Greek rule] didn't feel comfortable transgressing," Rabbi Levine said.

That there's no mention of the Jews being punished for failing to give a sacrifice to Hercules suggests they didn't suffer restrictions on their religion.

To demonstrate the apparent influence of Hellenism on Jewish culture, Levine raised the example of the biblical scroll the Song of Songs.

Though often interpreted by Jewish sources as an expression of the love between man and God, Rabbi Levine noted, "It's very doubtful that this was the original intent. It's not, God forbid, pornographic, but it's a blatant love poem similar to those written in the Hellenistic world."

Ultimately, he concluded, we cannot, all these years later, really know what triggered the Maccabean revolt, whether it was a "cultural revolt against Hellenization or a political revolt against the king," but can only speculate. ■

Photo evokes WWII Chanukah

LILA SARICK
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All that Bill Sheine has is a grainy black-and-white photo of a group of Canadian soldiers, with a cryptic note neatly printed on the back.

"Jewish servicemen in Eindhoven, Holland Dec. 10, 1944. We made a Chanukah party for Jewish children that were hidden out. We brought food and gifts for the kids."

Sheine is sure that his uncle Harold Sheine is in that photo, but wishes he knew more about the story.

His uncle Harold, and another uncle, Max, who both served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II, have since died.

In the final months of the war, Canadian forces were given the key task of liberating the Netherlands from Nazi occupation, and today, the Dutch fondly remember Canada for that effort.

Bill, who was a child during the war, remembers going to the armoury when his dashing uncles came home from serving overseas.

"It sounded glamorous. They came off in their uniforms, there was a band and a lot of excitement," Bill recalled.

After the war, the uncles found work, married and settled back into their civilian lives.

"They were very quiet men. They never spoke about their past," recalls Donna, Bill's wife.

"They were both sweet guys… They were well-known and respected," she said.

Bill recalls that all the family knows is that Harold, who enlisted in 1940 at the age of 23, served with the ground crew in the 403 Bomber Squadron and spent time at the large air base in Eindhoven.

"I never would have thought there were 22 Jewish air force men," Bill muses looking at the photo.

A photo of Harold taken on Remembrance Day in 2007, two years before he died at Sunnybrook Hospital's veterans wing, shows him sporting rows of medals pinned to his suit jacket.

Sadly, Bill says "we never had a clue what all the medals were for."

It's unlikely that Harold received a medal for the act of kindness he and his fellow servicemen performed that December day for a group of Jewish children who emerged from hiding. But 70 years after that impromptu Chanukah party, it is still remembered by at least one serviceman's family. ■

Harold Sheine, top right, and fellow Jewish servicemen in 1944.

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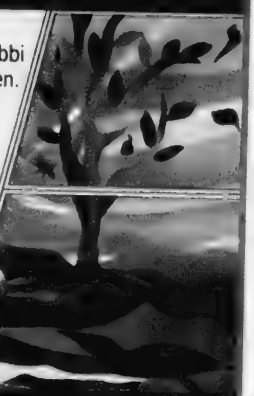

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GUEST VOICE

Remembering Jewish refugees from Arab countries

David Koschitzky

On Nov. 30, Jewish communities in multiple Canadian cities gathered to commemorate the experience of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. These events were part of a global initiative inspired by a law passed this summer in the Knesset, which set the date for an official day of remembrance in Israel.

Prior to the UN vote to partition Palestine on Nov. 29 1947, Egypt's representative menacingly declared: "the lives of one million Jews in Muslim countries would be jeopardized by the establishment of a Jewish state." This threat soon became a gruesome reality. By 1956, Egypt's Jews were given a horrific ultimatum: exile or concentration camps.

In the decades following Israel's establishment, more than 850,000 Jews were forced to leave the Middle East and North Africa. Although most of them found shelter in the Jewish state, thousands built new lives in Canada. For the refugees and their families this cause is a fundamental matter of justice, and honouring their experience is a Canadian imperative.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and its predecessor organizations have long advocated for Jewish refugees from Arab countries. For example, after extensive lobbying by the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canadian government decided to facilitate the immigration of North African Jews to Canada in 1956, citing "urgent humanitarian considerations." This resulted in approximately 25,000 Jews coming to Canada from Morocco as part of the exodus of over 200,000 Jewish Moroccans between 1948 and 1967.

Our advocacy on this issue continues to this day. The commemorative events of Nov. 30 were held just a few short months after all parties in the House of Commons and the Government of Canada agreed to "officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees who were displaced from states in the Middle East and North Africa after 1948." Canada's is the first cabinet-level recognition of the Jewish refugees outside Israel.

This outcome was the result of hard work spanning decades, culminating in a partnership between CIJA and an international coalition led by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries. CIJA facilitated parliamentary hearings on the issue in the House of Commons foreign affairs committee in co-operation with all political parties beginning in May 2013, featuring extensive testimony from a variety of experts, including CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

Perhaps the most compelling witnesses were two refugees from Iraq, who recounted the profound loss they experienced and the exemplary lives they went on to build here in Canada. They demonstrated unequivocally that this is a Canadian issue requiring Canadian attention. In November 2013, the committee issued a report recommending that Canada officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and encourage the negotiating parties to take into account all refugee populations in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflict.

This is a major milestone, but our work is not finished. CIJA will continue to engage the government to translate this achievement into a substantive change to Canadian foreign policy. Two refugee populations resulted from the Arab-Israeli conflict, but Canadian Middle East policy only accounts for the Palestinians. It is time this official policy recognized that a refugee is a refugee regardless of ethnic or religious background.

Beyond the government, we collectively need to do more to raise awareness among Jews and non-Jews alike. Far too many within our own community know nothing about the experience of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. I hope this inaugural commemoration of the exodus of Jews from Arab countries will be the first of many gatherings of increasing prominence. Just as the entire Jewish community unites to mark Yom Hazikaron and Yom Hashoah, we should likewise gather annually to remember those among us who suffered so immensely as a result of Arab rejectionism.

The non-Jewish world also needs to learn from this experience. There is a saying that after Saturday comes Sunday. We see this playing out across the Middle East today, as Islamist factions like IS, Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas are violently persecuting Christians and other religious minorities. Now more than ever it behooves Canadians of all backgrounds to recall the devastation experienced by Middle Eastern and North African Jewry. We need not wait until next November to do so. ■

David Koschitzky is chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Toronto friends plan JNF Israel agri-tech mission

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Inaugural trip aims to expose young professionals to the country's growing agri-tech sector.

Jon Schwartz, 27, now an employee at a boutique merchant investment bank, did his master's in environmental studies at Tel Aviv University and, having had the opportunity to meet high-profile academics and entrepreneurs in Israel's clean technology sector, returned to Toronto inspired by what he described as a "thriving sub-category of the start-up nation."

"I came home just over a year ago and didn't want to be the guy who always talked about what I'd learned," Schwartz explained. "I wanted to find a way to share it."

Seven months ago, he and two friends, Matt Zerker, who works at an asset management company, and Daniel Shiff, an articling student at a Toronto law firm, both 27, devised a way to do just that. Partnering with the Jewish National Fund (JNF), they're planning an inaugural, 10-day agri-tech mission to Israel this spring.

The idea is to send 25 young professionals or graduate students with an interest in agriculture, technology and business to Israel to gain exposure to the country's agricultural technology industry.

With the goal of strengthening ties between Canadian and Israeli leaders in technology and sustainable business, the participants will engage with Israeli companies, politicians, academics and entrepreneurs working toward innovations in the agricultural sphere. The cross-country tour will include a stop at the 2015 international Agritech Conference in Tel Aviv.

"We're trying to get people to engage with Israel in a space that a lot of people here don't know about, and which is truly revolutionary," Zerker said.

"We're trying to create a community, to stress to the participants that, once you've met the people in Israel creating these revolutionary technologies, these people become your network. You have the opportunity to do with that network as you see fit."

He said they hope to set up future networking events in Canada and invite Israeli businesses to attend.

"We're looking for people who want to engage in projects, to build a community and create events that will further the goals we've set out."

To draw participants, the three have reached out to students – Jewish and non-Jewish – in environmental studies and business programs at major Canadian universities, and they've tapped into the networks of JNF, the Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) and the House, which runs programming for Jewish young adults.

JNF has helped provide the organizers with the infrastructure and logistics necessary to make the trip possible, and they've secured some financial support from anonymous JNF donors and from the company GreenSoil Investments.

They're currently doing additional fundraising to help develop their model, and are hoping to get sufficient sponsorship to set the trip's per-person cost at between $1,000 and $1,500, inclusive.

The aim is to donate extra proceeds to Israel's Central Arava R&D Station, a research-and-development centre that grows more than 7,500 acres of bio-organic vegetables, flowers and dates and campaigns for pesticide-free farming in the region.

"This will really help make participants young leaders, as they'll be able to have a real financial impact in Israel," Schwartz said.

The mission will depart April 26, 2015 and return May 7. Those interested in applying can visit toronto.jnf.ca/agri-tech.html. ■

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Haifa, Halifax talk about expanding ties

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Cobie Brosh

Cobie Brosh came to Halifax with optimism.

The executive director of the Haifa Foundation hoped to spread the good word about the charitable organization that serves Israel's third-largest city and has a mandate to advance educational and cultural coexistence and community and environmental projects, as well as improve the quality of life for all of Haifa's residents.

He did just that, but with limited concrete success after a Nov. 25 luncheon with Halifax's Jewish community leaders and a private meeting with Mayor Michael Savage.

Brosh, Israel's former consul general in Toronto, gave the luncheon group, most of whom had visited Israel's major port city before, a brief overview of Haifa and the unique harmony and understanding that exists between its citizens. He noted that longtime residents, both Jewish and Arab, live among new immigrants from the former Soviet Bloc Ethiopia and other countries.

"We live together, with an Arab community, in peace, harmony and mutual respect," he said, adding with a smile, "There's even tolerance there among Jews as well."

Brosh's trip to Halifax was specifically arranged to meet Savage after Israel's ambassador to Canada, Rafael Barak sent a message to Savage inviting him to visit Israel following Barak's trip to Halifax in late summer.

"I have been to Israel twice," said Savage, who has been mayor since 2012 and served as Liberal MP for Dartmouth, N.S., from 2004 to 2011. He visited Israel as part of a mission organized by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and represented the Department of Public Health.

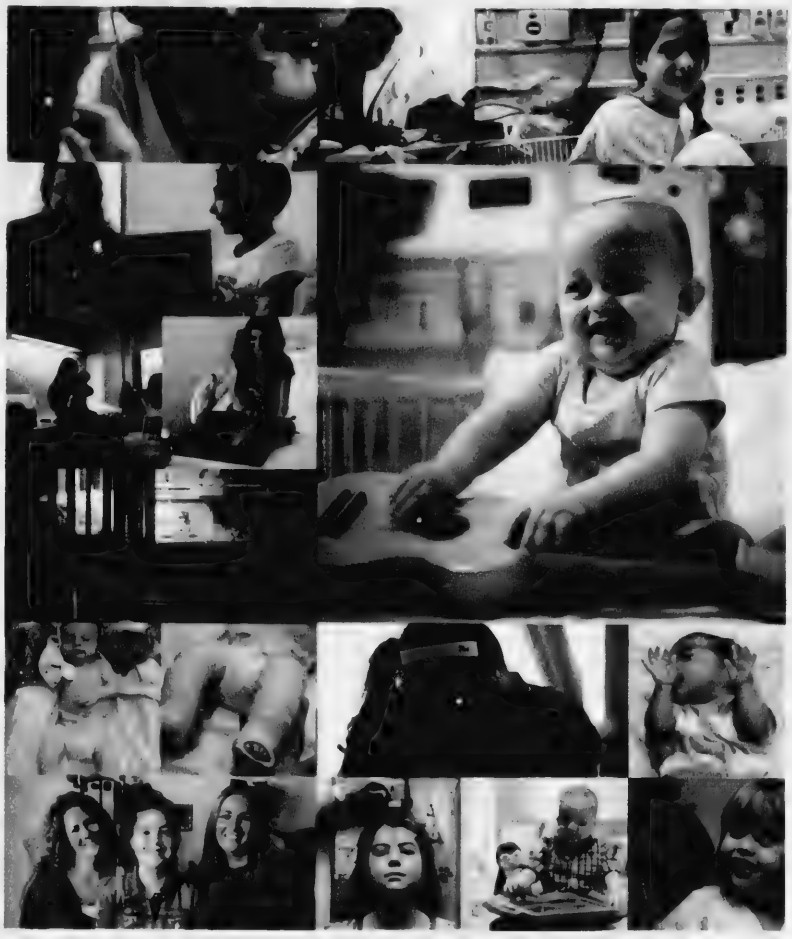
"I have no trip planned now, but the possibility is always there. If I did, it would be part of a business delegation from Halifax to promote co-operation between Israel and our city. I'm open to it. We're very similar in size, the fact we're port cities, have strong universities and impressive IT sectors."

During his meeting with Savage, Brosh suggested twinning Haifa with Halifax, which is usually a three-year process, but that can be shortened if a charitable project, such as funding a park or playground in Haifa, is arranged by the City of Halifax or by the Jewish community.

Jewish community members expressed little interest in such a venture, contending the city's small number of Jews are heavily committed to UJA, the Jewish National Fund and other Israeli charities. They said Halifax is not prepared to take this step.

Brosh and Savage talked of the similarities of the two cities making twinning a natural fit. Savage told Brosh it would make sense if there were firm business opportunities to be pursued.

The Haifa Foundation was established in 1983. Brosh, a graduate of Hebrew University, was in the diplomatic corps for many years, including four as consul general for Toronto and Western Canada from 2003 to 2007. He has been executive director of the Haifa Foundation since 2007. ■



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 11, 2014

Shuls help homeless with Out of the Cold effort

SHERI SHEFA
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Synagogue members throughout the GTA will be bringing a little Chanukah cheer to the city's homeless and underprivileged community through an annual volunteer initiative called Out of the Cold.

At Temple Har Zion in Thornhill, Rickie Glickman has been running the Out of the Cold program with Sid Finkelstein since the late Arieh Cohen brought the program to the shul 15 years ago.

Glickman explained that the program – which runs through Mosaic Interfaith, an umbrella organization in York Region that promotes understanding and dialogue among different religions – aims to feed, clothe and shelter the city's most vulnerable once a week throughout the winter months.

Over the years, Out of the Cold has become a city-wide coalition of religious and charitable groups independently run entirely by volunteers.

On Dec. 17, members of various congregations will join Har Zion to greet about 80 guests who are looking forward to a hearty Chanukah dinner – complete with latkes courtesy of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto congregants – and a warm place to sleep.

Volunteers from Shaar Shalom Synagogue, Adath Israel Congregation and Temple Kol Ami are also active participants in Har Zion's Out of the Cold program.

Glickman, who has been involved with the program from the start, said she never anticipated some of the amazing things that have come out of it.

"We have Conservative shuls that have come on board, like Shaar Shalom, and now for the first time, Adath Israel is coming on board. To me, that is so nice that we can all work together," Glickman said.

"It's not often you can get everyone working together for a great cause. I expected to feed people, and I expected to give, but I didn't expect all the other things. The fact that we're working with the community from all different shuls… is amazing."

The program has also had a positive effect on what their guests have learned about the Jewish community.

"A lot of the guests that come to the program are not familiar with Jewish people… We were at another Out of the Cold site and somebody was talking bad about the Jewish People… This big guy stood up with tattoos all over him and said, 'There will be no bad talk about the Jewish people. They give me a place to stay and food to eat,'" Glickman recalled.

Volunteers prepare to serve 80 guests

"I never thought that was going to happen, that it would help educate some people about what it means to be Jewish. I didn't see that coming."

The program has also taught an important lesson to some of their younger volunteers.

"We're in Thornhill and we have a lot of volunteers who are kids, and they are very privileged," she said.

The children and teens see first hand how appreciative their underprivileged guests are to receive second-hand clothing items. "It just makes them a little bit more grounded and a little more aware of the world outside of their own."

Glickman said many of the guests are brought to Har Zion by volunteers who shuttle them from a church near the subway line.

"Or there are guests who just walk up, and we don't know where they're coming from. All we know is their first names," she said adding that some guests will leave after dinner with a bagged lunch and a bus token, and about 30 guests will sleep at the shul on mattresses.

In addition to food, volunteers are also sending their guests off with a Chanukah gift: a knapsack filled with items such as a sweatshirt, socks, underwear and toiletries.

She said establishments like Centre Street Deli, Longos and the YMCA of Greater Toronto have donated food.

"We get money, but it's not enough, and we rely on all these angels," Glickman said.

Har Zion's program will run each Wednesday until Jan. 7.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, is also running an Out of the Cold program every Monday night from Jan. 12 to March 2. Holy Blossom Temple, which has been running the program for the past 17 years, will host more than 110 people each Thursday until the end of March. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 11, 2014

New city councillor has history of Jewish involvement

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

The second time was the charm for Marty Morantz, one of seven new faces on Winnipeg city council as a result of last month's civic election.

The new councillor for the ward of Charleswood-Tuxedo in south Winnipeg won the seat by nearly 500 votes over the second-place candidate in a field of five. The previous councillor resigned to make an unsuccessful run for mayor.

The lawyer and president of Jernat Investments Ltd. ran for the Progressive Conservatives in the last provincial election in 2011, finishing second.

"I have been very concerned about what was going on at city hall for quite a few years now," he said, referring to three audits into real estate transactions and construction cost overruns involving city hall bureaucrats that tarnished outgoing Mayor Sam Katz's final term in office. (Katz, Winnipeg's first Jewish mayor, announced his decision to retire in June after 10 years in the mayor's chair.)

"As well, I have always been interested in serving at this level of government," Morantz said. "I believe in giving back to the community."

Marty Morantz

He identified infrastructure renewal and greater accountability as his top concerns at city hall.

> *I have been very concerned about what was going on at city hall for quite a few years now*

Over the years, Morantz has been active in the Jewish community here. In his younger days, he co-chaired the Jewish National Fund's young adult division. He has also served on the board of the Shalom Residences (which operates residential group homes for Jewish adults with developmental disabilities) and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's allocations committee. And he and his siblings contributed the funding for the Saul Morantz Building in honour of their father at the Simkin Centre, Winnipeg's Jewish seniors nursing home.

Morantz is married to Lisa and the couple have two teenage sons.

Winnipeg City Council has had some prominent and long-serving Jewish councillors in the past. Of particular note were Joe Zuken, who for a long time was the only community representative on council, and international chess grandmaster Abe Yanofsky.

The longest-serving current city councillor of Jewish parentage is Jenny Gerbasi, but she has never been active in the Jewish community.

Also in last month's municipal election, Shari Decter Hirst, the first Jewish mayor in the history of Brandon, Manitoba's second-largest city, was defeated in her effort to win re-election to a second term.

Following a first term marred by conflict-of-interest allegations and having had properties she owned twice appear on the city's tax-arrears list, Decter Hirst received less than 30 per cent of the vote.

In addition, she did very little campaigning – not even bothering setting up a campaign headquarters or distributing lawn signs. Her campaign materials reportedly consisted of one billboard and ads on buses. ■

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Chassidim not satisfied with sukkah 'compromise'

JANICE ARNOLD
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How long a sukkah can remain standing in the Montreal borough of Outremont has become the latest source of tension between the borough's Jews – mostly Chassidim – and some of its other residents.

The last two public council meetings have been dominated by the question of whether the borough should extend the number of days the temporary shelters can be kept on private property or whether the existing regulation should be more restrictive.

Many in Outremont's various chassidic communities, supported by chassidic councillor Mindy Pollak, want more time, saying the 15-day allowance that's been on the books for years is not enough. The council has also heard from those who think sukkahs are an eyesore or dangerous and should be severely curtailed.

At the most recent meeting on Dec. 1, a majority of the five-member council rejected a recommendation from the borough's own urban planning department that sukkahs be permitted seven days before the nine-day holiday of Sukkot and seven days afterward.

They instead supported a counter-proposal – with a slight modification – by councillor Céline Forget, a longtime critic of the Chassidim's alleged flouting of municipal regulations, to further limit when sukkahs can be in place.

The total number of days stipulated in a borough bylaw – 15 – remains the same, but Forget's proposed amendment specifically stated that these days cover three days before the holiday of Sukkot and three days after.

After a long and sometimes heated debate, a compromise was reached to re-word the amendment to "three weekdays" before and after Sukkot.

Before, the number of days preceding and following the nine-day festival was not spelled out, which allowed a certain measure of flexibility, but not enough, according to many Chassidim, who make up about a quarter of the borough's population of about 25,000.

Critics also claimed that the vague time period made it difficult to enforce the regulation.

Pollak told *The CJN* that a 23-day period would be in line with the regulation in the neighbouring borough of Côte des Neiges-Notre-de-Grâce.

She argued that the extra time is needed because Chassidim cannot work on building or dismantling their sukkahs on Shabbat – Saturday – and Outremont prohibits noisy construction on Sunday. Depending on what day of the week Sukkot begins and the weather, the amount of time available can be quite short, she said.

Mindy Pollak

Pollak is not satisfied with the "weekday" compromise, as much on principle as for practical reasons. "There is no other city that specifies in such detail the limits imposed."

She points out that next year Sukkot begins on a Sunday – at sundown Sept. 27 – which will make it difficult to comply with the three-day rule.

The seven-day before, seven-day after proposition is supported by Friends of Hutchison, an activist group of Chassidim and non-Jews who, since 2011, have been trying to ease tensions and misunderstanding between the communities.

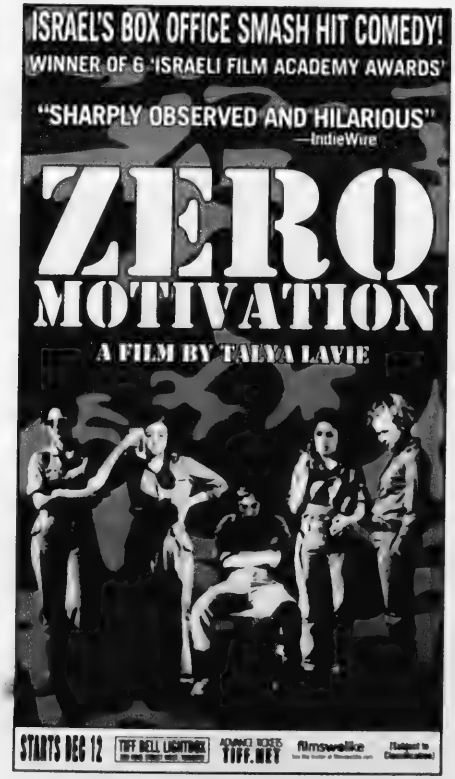
They have appealed to Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre to intervene, calling the Outremont bylaw the most severe in North America when it comes to sukkahs.

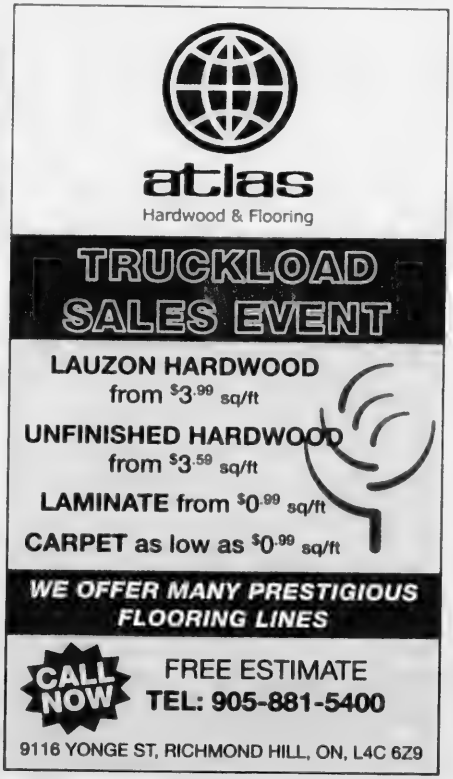
Friends of Hutchison founder Leah Marshy, who is not Jewish, has written that she feels Chassidim in Outremont continue to be the target of "a pattern of misinformation" and "out-and-out harassment" that's reflected in unfair bylaws.

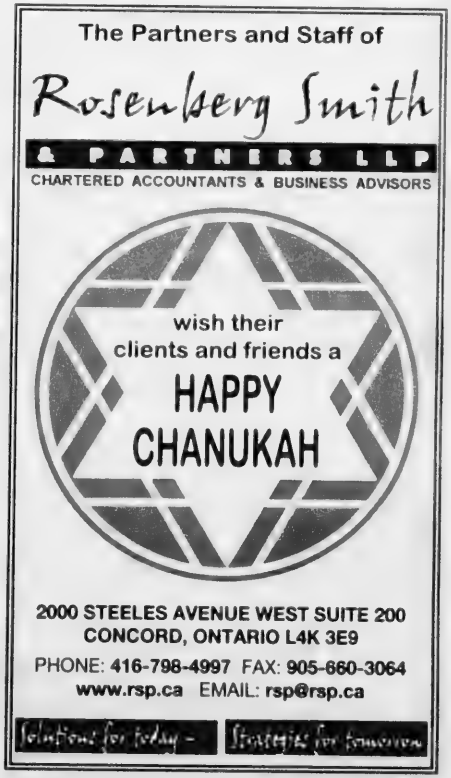
Even though they have been residents of Outremont for three generations and now make up 25 per cent of the population, she said, they have "never had the luxury of being considered full citizens."

Before the council decision, borough mayor Marie Cinq-Mars warned against allowing the sukkah issue to disrupt the "fragile" peace that has been achieved among Outremont's diverse communities of late.

"We have an obligation of reasonable accommodation for certain religious practices. It's not me that invented it, it's the Charter [of Rights and Freedoms]," she said. "It's that way for the Russian Easter, the Lebanese Palm Sunday. It's the same thing for the sukkah." ■



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Rabbi thanks imam who condemned shul attack

JANICE ARNOLD
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Rabbi Boruch Perton, left, meets with Sheikh Samir Assi in his Akko mosque.

Rabbi Boruch Perton's chief objective when he was sent to Israel last month by Beth Zion Congregation in Montreal was to accompany Shelley Rothman-Benhaim, whose brother Howie lay in a coma in a Jerusalem hospital after the Nov. 18 synagogue attack, and to provide comfort to the grieving families.

But Rabbi Perton, who returned to Montreal Dec. 2, wanted to use the occasion to also further Arab-Jewish understanding.

On the fourth of his five days in Israel, Rabbi Perton drove more than two hours to the coastal city of Akko – to meet an imam.

Sheikh Samir Assi had visited to offer his condolences on the last day of the shivah in Jerusalem for the four rabbis murdered in the attack on the Kehilat Yaakov Synagogue.

"After he got back to Akko, his car was vandalized, covered in acid," said Rabbi Perton. "Police suspect that it was done by Muslim extremists." Rabbi Perton wanted to thank him for coming to Jerusalem and "being with us at this time of loss."

He met Sheikh Assi at his Al-Jazzar mosque for an hour of conversation. Rabbi Perton, who lived in Israel for six years, is fluent in Hebrew. "I was overwhelmed by his hospitality. He had brought in kosher food and welcomed me like a brother."

Despite the risk, Sheikh Assi is devoted to fostering peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs, and Akko has become a model of what is possible .

"At the end of Ramadan, the Jewish community is invited to share in kosher meals with the Muslim community. And the Jewish community reciprocates by inviting Muslims to break the fast with them after Yom Kippur," said Rabbi Perton.

Sheikh Assi told his visitor that he believes peace is possible, but it takes courage.

"He said that for every Muslim extremist, he thinks there are 10 moderates who are afraid to speak up," Rabbi Perton said. "He kept using the word 'tikvah' – hope, that we can live with each other."

About two-thirds of Akko's population is Jewish, most of the rest are Muslim.

Rabbi Perton, and Rothman-Benhaim's – , who stayed on longer in Israel – trips were sponsored by members of Beth Zion, a modern Orthodox congregation of over 500 families in Côte St. Luc.

Rabbi Perton, who became the synagogue's full-time spiritual leader in August, hopes to invite Sheikh Assi to Montreal to speak to the Jewish community. This was his first foray into dialogue with Muslims or Arabs, and he hopes to continue it.

His "bridge-building" mission did not end there. Rabbi Perton then drove to the Druze village of Yunach Jat in the northern Galilee, the hometown of the Druze police officer Zidan Saif who was killed while trying to stop the synagogue massacre.

Rabbi Perton visited with Saif's large extended family, offering sympathy and the appreciation of the Montreal Jewish community for Saif's selfless defence of the synagogue and its Jewish worshippers.

They also treated him warmly, welcoming him into their home."I was amazed to learn that 95 per cent of the Druze serve in the Israeli army and at how loyal they are to Israel," said Rabbi Perton, 49, a Brooklyn, N.Y., native who was formerly educational director of Hebrew Academy

"The most amazing thing was when a man, not a relative of Zidan Saif, came over to me privately to speak. He said he had a very sick daughter and could I come over and give her a blessing.

"I couldn't say no. The entire family was at the home. The mother took me into a room where there was a girl, 12 years old, in a wheelchair. She has MS.

"I recited a blessing with my hand on her head, wishing her a refuah shleimah. I told them we will include her name back at Beth Zion to be included in the *misheberach* (prayers for the sick).

"I think we should be giving this community whatever support we can."

On his last full day in Israel, Dec. 1, Rabbi Perton returned to the bedside of Rothman.

"He is slowly being taken out of the medically induced coma... They don't know what the prognosis is. They are optimistic but there will be permanent damage. He lost an eye, his arm was shattered," said Rabbi Perton.

However, he was heartened by the amount of support Rothman and his family, which includes 10 children, are receiving from all kinds of people through visits and gifts of food. On that day, Canada's ambassador to Israel, Vivian Bercovici, paid a call at the hospital. Rothman-Benhaim has been keeping a virtual vigil by his side, Rabbi Perton said.

"Howie is a strong person. But there still is a lot of doubt. No one knows what's going to be," said Rabbi Perton. ■

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GUEST VOICE

Consultation the key to solving issues in Winnipeg

Adam Bronstone

We live in a golden age. More than at any time in the history of Jewish life in North America, Jews can be anything, join everywhere and work in any field. And because of this, Jewish organizations have to be modern, creative and innovative in everything they do, so as to maintain relevancy in a global society that competes for both our time and financial support.

In this regard, *CJN* contributor Joanne Seiff ("Winnipeg must innovate if it wants a Jewish future," *CJN* Dec. 4) is correct that the Winnipeg Jewish community – in truth, every Jewish community – must be as user-friendly and innovative as possible in order to compete for the attention of the Jewish consumer. Our federation strives to work with its beneficiary agencies and partnering organizations, including synagogues, to deliver the services needed by our community members today and in the future. The inclusive nature of this process is how we will be able to, over time, solve many issues that require a communal approach. This is the only way our issues ever get solved.

That said, allow me to address some of the specific issues Seiff brought up in her piece.

First, there was never any "agreement" made between the federation and the synagogues to close afternoon and weekend religious schools. Next, with respect to daycare, the current shortage of spots – not only in the Jewish community but in the entire city of Winnipeg – unfortunately began to manifest itself shortly after the Jewish community campus was built. In fact, when our community centre was being planned, the research conducted at the time indicated daycare was not needed and would not be fully used there. Subsequently, each time the community was able to add spaces, the waiting list increased dramatically as soon as the spots were taken. In order to address this growing need, an important project has been undertaken to build a new community daycare in an accessible satellite location off campus.

Seiff also raised the issue of our community being unprepared to receive the many newcomers who have chosen to make Winnipeg their home in the past 15 years since the inception of the Grow Winnipeg project. These numerous newcomers to our community were accepted through the immigration system based on their professional qualifications, age, family makeup and interest in being part of the Jewish community.

Granted, the absorption and engagement of the newcomer population has been a learning process for them, as it has been for the existing Jewish community. They come from all kinds of places, and many find the concept of synagogue membership foreign and a little confusing.

There has been some adjusting and adapting necessary to make newcomers feel welcome and to help them create inroads into the community. An example would be the opportunities to access tickets for High Holidays as a result of advertising through a joint federation-synagogue relationship, and the efforts of Jewish Child and Family Service. There are numerous adult- and family-oriented activities designed to engage everyone in the community without an obligation of affiliation. These community-wide initiatives, which are financially accessible, are encouraging many who are new to our community to become involved in holiday celebrations and inter-denominational events.

The Winnipeg Jewish community is very strong, and full of great people, programs and institutions. On any given day or night, Winnipeggers can 'do Jewish' in many exciting ways – from Israeli dancing and Jewish text study, to cooking classes and discussing current events. Recently, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, author Naomi Ragen and an Israeli jazz band have all paid visits to the Jewish campus, where overflowing crowds take part in an amazing display of Jewish life.

I invite Joanne Seiff, and the rest of my community, to continue to be involved in the many planning conversations and activities that exist in our community, and to be a part of the future of Winnipeg's great Jewish community. ■

Adam Bronstone is CEO of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

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Stars aplenty attend Ve'ahavta's chai anniversary fundraiser

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The stars shone Sunday night at Toronto's Koerner Hall, where Ve'ahavta's volunteers and clients paid tribute to the organization at its Tikun Olam Awards Ceremony and fundraising gala.

Starry Nights, was indeed a star-studded affair attended by more than 500 supporters to mark Ve'ahavta's 18th year of providing relief to hunger, homelessness and poverty in Toronto and abroad, in keeping with its talmudically based mandate to spread justice and heal the world.

MCed by CBC Radio host Michael Enright, the gala heard common themes of redemption and repair associated with Ve'ahavta, the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee, which runs a variety of outreach and educational programs intended to help all in need and to build bridges between Jews and others.

Toronto Mayor John Tory dropped in briefly.

Ve'ahavta chair Bernie Farber tallied the group's many projects, including one called Briut (Hebrew for "health"), which promotes health initiatives in conjunction with seven First Nation communities in Kenora, Ont.

Beginning this year as part of its Mobile Jewish Response to the Homeless program, which delivers food and clothing on the streets of Toronto, Ve'ahavta started a "harm reduction" initiative. Encouraged by the City of Toronto, it distributes clean instruments to drug users to combat the spread of AIDS and HIV.

From left, keynote speaker and entertainer Emmanuel Jal, honoree Irwin Cotler and Ve'ahavta president and CEO Avrum Rosensweig at Sunday's Starry Nights gala. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

The "jewel in the crown," Farber said, is the Ve'ahavta Street Academy, an eight-week program in partnership with George Brown College for people living on or near the streets of Toronto to help them access education.

The organization handed out six awards at the event. The Remembrance award went to CBC Radio producer Karen Levine, author of the acclaimed book *Hana's Suitcase*; Holocaust survivor George Brady, brother of the book's subject; and women's rights activist Margie Wolfe.

Human rights advocate and former justice minister Irwin Cotler, Liberal MP for Mount Royal, received the award for education, while Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld, rabbi emeritus at Temple Emanu-El and a long-time social justice and anti-poverty activist, accepted the prize for humanitarianism in the name of the late social activist June Callwood.

Lianne and Bruce Leboff were given the award for outstanding achievement in community volunteerism; Dr. Gary Glassman was recognized with an award in medicine for his work in promoting oral health care in Jamaica; and the award for outstanding achievement in youth leadership went to Shane Feldman, founder of Count Me In, a student-led charity that encourages community involvement among young people.

Keynote speaker Emmanuel Jal, an award-winning hip-hop artist and humanitarian, told his harrowing tale of having been a child soldier in the new country of South Sudan during its war of secession from Sudan. Today, he leads a global campaign for peace.

Compelling stories of what Ve'ahavta does came from two of its clients. Brian Ricciardi, now 48, recalled that he had been raped as a young man and that his attacker was acquitted. Unable to rid himself of the trauma, he crawled into bed one night and "didn't get up for the next eight years. During this time I forgot how to live."

After receiving information on Ve'ahavta's writing contest, he enrolled in the Street Academy, and today studies psychology and English, with his life back on track.

Jillann Mignon, 28, a former Toronto sex worker, also said she owes her life to the Ve'ahavta Street Academy.

The organization has "not only influenced me, but generations to come because the skills I learned at VSA will be passed down to my son and his future sons," Mignon told a transfixed audience. "Ve'ahavta has given me a gift that transcends: the gift of love. This is the embodiment of Ve'ahavta: the idea that all of God's children have value and are precious in his eyes." ■

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People celebrate holidays differently

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

My children, not for a split second, felt they were missing out on anything."

Rabbi Jordan Helfman, assistant rabbi at Toronto's Reform Holy Blossom Temple, agreed that consumerism is relatively new to Chanukah, but when asked whether consumerism distracts from the true essence of Chanukah, he grew contemplative.

"Well, it's kind of a funny question. What is Chanukah all about? Resisting assimilation is part of it. People often reframe that as fighting for the freedom to practise religion how we want…there's certainly no tradition of Chanukah ornaments."

He continued: "On the other hand, there's *hiddur mitzvah* – the idea of trying to beautify things when you celebrate them, of advertising the miracle and letting people know it's Chanukah. So there's actually a good reason to put Chanukah tchatchkes on your lawn, or wherever."

Rabbi Reuben Joshua Poupko, rabbi of the Orthodox Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation in Montreal, said Chanukah was about more than opening presents. "It's important to try to remember the core message, which is the fight for religious freedom in the face of an oppressive majority."

He acknowledged, however, that the Jewish community is diverse, and that people relate to the holidays differently.

"For some, Chanukah is about kids and presents and that's all there is, and for others, it's a historical reminder to assert Jewish dignity in the face of oppression," Rabbi Poupko said. "In the minds of some Jews, the holiday provides a counterweight to the dominant culture, at a time when the dominant culture is very all-encompassing. For others, the holiday is understood in its own context and its own way."

Rabbi Michael Whitman of Montreal's modern Orthodox congregation Adath Israel, disagreed with the premise that Chanukah is becoming overly commercialized, saying he's actually seen a shift away from presents as a focus.

"I would say more families are moving to a more Jewish appreciation of Chanukah," he said. "Most of the members of my synagogue are not observant, but they have strong Jewish feelings…I'm sure there are families that give lots of gifts, but I don't see that as a dominant part of Chanukah. I think people are looking for what is meaningful."

He stressed the value of making the holiday "a happy time," by including treats for children, good food and family togetherness. If giving presents is part of this, Rabbi Whitman said he doesn't see that as particularly problematic, so long as it's kept within the context of an "authentic Chanukah."

For him, authentic means affirming Jewish pride and treasuring spirituality over materialism.

Rabbi Adam Cutler of Toronto's Conservative Beth Tzedec Congregation, said he's not aware of any increased commercialization of Chanukah, and noted that the influence of Christmas on the former can be traced back to German Jewish communities in the United States.

"The inclusion of presents, as opposed to [the more traditional custom] of giving gelt, is an obvious response to Christmas."

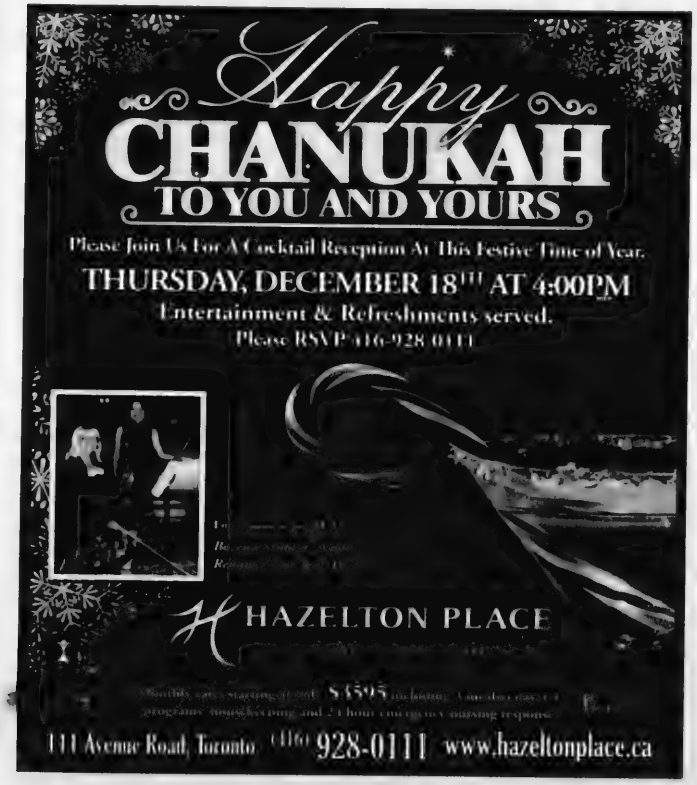
Regarding the fundamental meaning of the holiday, Rabbi Cutler referred to the complicated nature of the Chanukah story.

"Traditionally, we've said it's a story of Jews defending themselves against the big, bad Greeks who wouldn't let them celebrate their religion…but it's actually more about a civil war between those Jews who were open to the idea of Hellenization and those who were not. It makes us consider questions about personal religious freedoms, about the togetherness of a community and about what it means to be a Jew in a modernizing world."

Chanukah, then, can open up a wider discussion about how we as Jews wish to be integrated in the non-Jewish world, and where we want to draw limits.

And this can certainly include the question of how much emphasis to put on gifts, as well as whether Chanukah's sometimes emulation of Christmas is a good thing.

"Do we welcome the inclusion of presents as a replacement for gelt?" Rabbi Cutler said. "Does it undermine the holiday? Add a nice addition to it? These are questions that all caring, thoughtful parents will ask, and all will come to a conclusion for their own family." ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 11, 2014

Non-Jew works to restore Saskatchewan town's old shul

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Before and after photos of Don Robinson's synagogue renovation project in Melville, Sask. DON ROBINSON PHOTOS

For Don Robinson, the restoration of Melville's old synagogue is a labour of love

Although he's not Jewish and is a relative newcomer to the northeastern Saskatchewan community, Robinson feels a great deal of respect and veneration for the former shul he has been painstakingly rebuilding for the past two years.

"I have been told that this is one of just two former synagogue buildings still standing in this part of Saskatchewan," he says. (The Beth Israel Synagogue in Eden Bridge, a former Jewish farm colony, was designated a municipal heritage site by the Rural Municipality of Willow Creek in 2003. It's the oldest surviving shul in Saskatchewan.)

According to information provided by Tony Wohlfarth, a former Jewish resident of Melville – his father was a doctor in town and the local coroner from the mid-1950s until 1992 – the Melville Hebrew Synagogue was founded in 1921. A day school was added in 1932. At its peak in the 1930s, the community numbered about 50 families. Wohlfarth celebrated his bar mitzvah at the shul in 1969. The synagogue was closed in 1970.

Robinson is originally from Montreal, where he was a general contractor with a particular interest in heritage buildings. About eight years ago, while on a cross-Canada drive, he stopped in Saskatchewan. He liked the province so much that he decided to stay and settled in Melville, a community of about 4,500 people 145 kilometres northeast of Regina. "People are friendlier in Saskatchewan," he says.

The first building that caught his eye in his new hometown was the abandoned synagogue, although he didn't realize initially that it had been a shul.

"When, at some point, I became aware that it was a synagogue, it drew me in like a magnet to restore the building," he says. "When I saw the inside for the first time, looking at all the structural issues and the crumbling foundations and so on, I would have walked away if I hadn't known it was a synagogue. That was what motivated me to save it and make it a mission."

At first, Robinson was unable to locate the building's owner, so he bought another place that he began to renovate to be his home. The renovations led him to visit the town dump on several occasions. As a result, he got to know the dump manager, who, it turned out, owned the former synagogue building. "The guy had owned the building for about 10 years," Robinson recalls. "I expressed my interest in buying the property. We talked about it off and on for five years. After he died two years ago, his widow sold me the property.

"I bought it cheaply because it was on the verge of being condemned and was in danger of falling. I paid around $7,000 with the transfer fees."

It needed major work, he notes. "It's amazing that it was still standing. The foundations and walls were collapsing, and the joists were rotted. It was hard to know where to start."

He began by pouring a new foundation reinforced with steel to fix the original foundation wall under the building's kitchen section, where old bathrooms were in danger of collapsing. Then he broke up the concrete floor in the basement that had been badly damaged from the building not being heated, and from flooding and freezing over the years.

"We had to replace 80 per cent of the floor joists under the shul," he notes. "They were all rotted. We installed new main beams as well, and once we had them all in place, we were able to lift the building – it had sank considerably over the years. Once it was lifted to the original height, we poured concrete pads and added steel teleposts, replacing all the original vertical wood supports."

The Magen David facing the street was badly damaged and most of the window panes were broken. Robinson had to rebuild the original frame and repair a few sections and install new stained glass.

The old front porch was falling down and the concrete marker stone with the name Melville Synagogue 1932 was broken in two and mostly covered. He repaired the marking stone, levelled it and poured concrete underneath to support it properly.

He estimates he's spent about $65,000 thus far to restore the synagogue building.

"The building is structurally sound again. It should be good for another 50 years." Still to come, he says, is a new roof. "We also have to work on the windows and the insulation."

Robinson says he's respectful of the building and its history. He also tries to be aware of the many worshippers who once filled the synagogue. "I feel the former members of the Jewish community here watching over me," he says.

Robinson notes that a lot of older people in Melville have stopped in over the past couple of years to talk to him about his project. One visitor was a former electrician who once worked on the synagogue for the Jewish community.

For the most part though, he notes, very few people knew anything about the synagogue and the former Jewish community in Melville. "Now they know about the synagogue," he says.

Robinson says he'd like to see the community in Melville use the restored structure for non-profit events. "Some groups have already used the building for their programs," he says. He's also considering renting out space in the basement to help pay for taxes and the upkeep.

"I recently had someone from the Saskatchewan Archives Board come to see me," he says. "The individual was thrilled to see what I have accomplished here. That tells me that I am on the right track."■

SeeJN | Recess farmers market

Toronto Heschel School students volunteer at recess to arrange produce stalls as part of the school's community supported agriculture program. In partnership with Shoresh and Everdale Farm, families from the school receive fresh, local, sustainably grown produce every week and help support local farmers and sustainable growing practices.

Website offers details on Jewish immigrants to Canada

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A new source of genealogical information about Jewish immigrants to Canada from the 1930s to the 1950s has recently come online.

Canadian Jewish historians have dubbed the period as the "None Is Too Many" era because of the restrictive policies against Jews then in effect. However, families of thousands of would-be Jewish immigrants apparently circumvented the restrictions through appeals to the Privy Council, an officiating body consisting of members of the federal cabinet and heads of various government departments.

For example, Chil Lustgarten was a 28-year-old single salesman, a "citizen and resident of Poland of Hebrew race" who, in 1934, wasn't permitted to enter Canada. But his prospects changed for the better after a sister in Canada appealed to the Privy Council on his behalf.

The appeal, which had the support of a member of Parliament, detailed the sister's good employment and savings record, and named and outlined the extensive business interests of a cousin who was prepared to give Lustgarten an interest in his business. According to the order-in-council papers, the appeal was approved, and Lustgarten was given five months to come to Canada. Presumably, he did so.

Until recently, such federal order-in-council files were unindexed and accessible only to researchers prepared to slog through boxes in person at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in Ottawa. The files are now much more easily accessible, thanks to a former LAC reference clerk and her sister.

While working at LAC several years ago, Joanna Crandell discovered that some 850 orders-in-council lists related to immigrants such as Lustgarten were indexed under the subject heading "Immigration." Crandell examined the immigrant-related orders-in-council and "was overwhelmed at the amount of genealogical information they contained." She and her sister worked for three years to photograph and index the entries from 1930 to 1952. They plan to extend the index to 1954.

Recently posted online at www.orderincouncillists.com, the alphabetical index contains the names of about 25,000 immigrants, including some 5,000 Jews from 30 countries. The names of about 15,000 sponsoring Canadians are also included.

> *Although the lists start in 1930, the information about the sponsors can give details of immigrants who arrived in Canada much earlier*

"Although the lists start in 1930, the information about the sponsors can give details of immigrants who arrived in Canada much earlier," Crandell said. "In some cases the sponsors are an elderly couple who have been in Canada for many years and are bringing in a relative to help with the family farm or business."

Jews comprise the largest single ethnic group in the files, followed by almost 4,000 Chinese immigrants, who start to appear on the lists in 1948. About 2,500 of the Jewish immigrants came from Poland, about 1,000 from Germany, the others from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia and other countries.

"The Jewish immigrants were unique in several respects," Crandell said. "First, they are the only group in which women frequently sponsored their husbands – I have not seen that in any other entries. Second, some Jewish men misrepresented themselves as single and later applied to sponsor wives and children they had left behind. Given how the immigration system was so weighted against them, it's not surprising that they did this."

The orders-in-council lists are a newly available and potentially valuable source of information on Jewish immigrants to Canada, particularly in the periods both before and after the Holocaust. Researchers should consult the alphabetical index pages at www.orderincouncillists.com. Those who find a name of interest may write to Crandell requesting copies of the photographed pages for a cost of $20 per name. ■

Bill Gladstone is a Toronto-area writer and genealogist. His website is www.billgladstone.ca.

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Members of the Israeli government in March, 2013, seen here with then president Shimon Peres. FLASH 90 PHOTO

Netanyahu's fractured coalition

Lapid, Livni, Bennett, Liberman and the fall of Israel's 33rd government

COMPILED BY CJN STAFF

JANUARY 2013: Benjamin Netanyahu wins re-election as prime minister, but his Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu faction suffers significant losses at the polls, falling to 31 seats in the Knesset. The big winners are two new parties: Yair Lapid's centrist, domestic-focused Yesh Atid, which comes in second with 19 seats, and Naftali Bennett's nationalist Jewish Home, which wins 12 seats. Both opt to join Netanyahu's coalition, which takes nearly two months to assemble. Lapid becomes finance minister. Bennett is named economy minister. Tzipi Livni, leader of the Hatnua party, which takes six seats, becomes justice minister.

OCTOBER 2013: A day after meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama, Netanyahu tells the UN General Assembly Israel is ready to go it alone against Iran if the Islamic state comes close to obtaining a nuclear weapon.

JANUARY 2014: Prime Minister Stephen Harper makes his first trip to Israel, delivering a speech at the Knesset. Netanyahu welcomes him warmly.

FEBRUARY 2014: Lapid threatens to pull his party out of Netanyahu's coalition if the government doesn't pass legislation applying criminal sanctions to haredi draft-dodgers. The Knesset approves a new law a month later.

MARCH 2014: In one of many low-level skirmishes over the course of months, Israeli aircraft strike several targets in the Gaza Strip after Palestinians fire rockets into Israel, sending Israelis into bomb shelters.

APRIL 2014: After weeks of near breakdowns in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks brokered by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Israel suspends negotiations after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party signs a unity accord with Hamas. Obama responds by saying it may be time for a pause in Middle East peacemaking. Kerry later expresses regret for saying that Israel risks becoming an "apartheid" state or a non-Jewish one if a two-state solution is not implemented. U.S. negotiators blame Israel for the talks' collapse.

MAY 2014: Livni, the government's representative in peace talks, meets with Abbas in London. Livni's office says Netanyahu was told in advance about the meeting, and that the prime minister was reportedly angry and made sure to say Livni was not acting for his government. Bennett's party calls on Livni to quit the coalition.

JUNE 5: Israel issues tenders for the construction of some 1,500 homes and apartments in eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank. The announcement is seen as retaliation for the formation of the Palestinian unity government. Housing Minister Uri Ariel, of the Jewish Home party, calls the move a "fitting Zionist response to the formation of a Palestinian terror government" and says the announcement of new housing is "just the beginning."

JUNE 9: Lapid threatens to leave the government and bring it down after Bennett suggests unilaterally annexing parts of the West Bank is "the only sane plan" after the breakdown of peace talks.

JULY 7: Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman splits his Yisrael Beitenu faction from Netanyahu's Likud party, though he does not leave the coalition. Liberman criticizes the government for its tempered response to rocket fire from Gaza.

JULY 8: Israel launches Operation Protective Edge. The campaign begins with 10 days of intensive airstrikes in Gaza. After several failed ceasefire attempts, a ground invasion of Gaza follows. Hamas fires thousands of rockets into Israel, striking as far away as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and a Haifa suburb. In four weeks of fighting before a 72-hour ceasefire in early August, some 1,800 Palestinians are reported killed. Israel comes under heavy criticism for attacks that killed children, struck UN facilities and damaged civil infrastructure. Israel blames Hamas for using civilians as human shields and schools, hospitals and UN facilities as weapons depots. The death toll in Israel includes 64 soldiers and three civilians. Several of Israel's casualties are due to Palestinian infiltrations through tunnels burrowed under the Israel-Gaza border. Netanyahu claims destroying the tunnels is one of the war's main objectives.

JULY 15: Liberman criticizes the government for accepting an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire proposal with Hamas in Gaza, saying it gives the terror group time to re-arm. He calls for a full-scale ground assault and re-occupation of Gaza. Bennett reportedly also votes in cabinet against the ceasefire and consistently criticizes the government during the war for not going far enough in Gaza.

JULY 24: Former Knesset speaker and Netanyahu rival Reuven Rivlin of the Likud party is sworn in as president of Israel, after defeating Meir Sheetrit of Hatnua in a Knesset runoff vote in June. He succeeds Shimon Peres and becomes Israel's 10th head of state.

AUGUST 2014: As fighting in Gaza wanes and Israeli troops begin to pull back, Israel experiences several terror attacks inside the country perpetrated by West Bank Palestinians, including a tractor attack in Jerusalem.

AUG. 13: The 72-hour ceasefire that brought Operation Protective Edge to a halt expires, and Gazans resume intensive rocket fire against Israel. The Israeli military responds with airstrikes inside Gaza. A four-year-old child from a kibbutz near the Gaza border is the first Israeli child to die in the conflict.

SEPT. 2: The Obama administration urges Israel to reverse its appropriation of West Bank land for settlement building, saying it is counterproductive to peace efforts. The Israel Defence Forces Civil Administration announced Aug. 31 it would appropriate nearly 1,000 acres in the Gush Etzion bloc and convert it to state land. Centrist ministers in Netanyahu's government oppose the move, saying it will damage peace efforts. "Maintaining the support of the world was already challenging, so why was it so urgent to create another crisis with the United States and the world?" Lapid asks, referring to the recent war with Hamas.

NOV. 23: The cabinet passes a draft of a bill to present to the Knesset that would create a constitutional "Basic Law" defining Israel's identity as a Jewish state. Rivlin, a member of Netanyahu's own rightist Likud party, comes out against the measure, while Lapid and Livni both say they would vote against the bill in the Knesset, even if it means bringing down the government. The government is also criticized by the Obama administration.

DEC. 2: Netanyahu fires Livni and Lapid from cabinet, essentially dissolving his coalition government.

DEC. 3: The Knesset votes to dissolve, with new elections set for March 17, eight months ahead of schedule. ■

INTERNATIONAL

Who will win Israel's next election? Canadians react

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Berl Nadler looks at recent poll results in Israel and believes they go a long way to explaining the political machinations that have left the country's coalition government in tatters with a new election on the horizon.

The polls consistently show that the country is moving to the right, favouring incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party and its allies in the Jewish Home and Yisrael Beiteinu parties.

Netanyahu could very well have made the shrewd political calculation that it was time to jettison his more liberal coalition partners, whose views on security matters and social policy issues he did not share anyway. If poll results hold true until elections, scheduled for March 17, Netanyahu could well emerge strengthened and with ideologically compatible partners in government, Nadler suggested.

Nadler, who serves as co-chair of the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) GTA Council, emphasized he was speaking in his personal capacity. CIJA does not take a position on domestic Israeli political concerns, he said.

But in his view, Netanyahu is seen as stronger on security and tougher on terrorism than his political rivals. That image was only bolstered by the bloody attack on worshippers in a Jerusalem synagogue last month.

Mira Sucharov, associate professor of political science at Carleton University, agrees that security concerns are a factor in Netanyahu's popularity, but she believes the Israeli public has not given up on the social issues which helped get the Likud's coalition partners elected. Israelis are still concerned over the high cost of housing, about having the ultra-Orthodox contribute more to Israeli society, and about engaging with Palestinians in peace talks. There is also concern over proposed legislation that would see Israel declared a Jewish state, she said.

It was the proponents of those measures – ex-justice minister Tzipi Livni of Hatnua, on talks with the Palestinian Authority; ex-finance minister Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid, on cancelling a tax on apartments for first time buyers – who Netanyahu fired from his cabinet, precipitating the current crisis.

"I think there were fundamental disagreements between the coalition members and Netanyahu about social issues," said Sucharov.

Berl Nadler

Mira Sucharov

Francesca David

> *It [the coalition] didn't work out. There were a lot of tensions over social issues and to some extent over peace issues*
>
> **Frederick Krantz**
> **Canadian Institute for Jewish Research**

Israeli expat Francesca David follows the Israeli political scene closely from her home in Toronto. Two of her children live in Israel along with a couple of grandchildren.

The collapse of the coalition government was not unexpected, she said. "It was made up of patches, bits and pieces."

David was critical of Netanyahu for blocking proposed social reforms and for precipitating a crisis that could lead to costly new elections, which no one in Israel wants. She said none of her Israeli friends in Canada or in Israel supports the prime minister.

She criticized Netanyahu for constantly shifting positions on important issues. "We need a prime minister who is strong and when he makes a decision, he sticks to the decision. Bibi doesn't."

But according to several recent polls, Netanyahu's Likud Party would gain seats in the Knesset if an election were held today. According to a Channel 10 poll, reported in the *Times of Israel*, Likud would win 22 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, up from 19 today; Jewish Home would win 17; Labor, 13; Yisrael Beiteinu 12; Moshe Kahlon's unnamed party, 12; Yesh Atid, 9; United Torah Judaism, 8; Shas, 7; Meretz 7; Hatnua, 4; and Arab parties, 9.

A Channel 2 survey showed similar results.

But in a week of tremendous flux, polls late last week showed that while Likud remained the first choice for a plurality of voters, Netanyahu himself was becoming unpopular.

A Panels Research poll showed that 60 per cent of Israelis don't want Netanyahu to remain as prime minister, while 34 per cent said they did.

Yet, two of the surveys showed that while many Israelis blamed Netanyahu for the collapse of the coalition – 39 per cent in one, 49 per cent in the other – he came out ahead in the public's estimation of who would make the best prime minister.

Frederick Krantz, president of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (CIJR), said it's common for polls to show dissatisfaction with a prime minister after the collapse of a government. That does not necessarily predict how voters will react when faced with a ballot, he said.

For the past five or six years, Israelis have increasingly put their support behind right wing and centre-right parties, as "the Israeli public feels the peace process is no longer viable," he said.

After this summer's Gaza war, Netanyahu's popularity stood at 70 per cent, so it's too early to write him off, he suggested.

Much can change before elections in March, and for the centre and centre-left parties to succeed, the security situation would have to remain stable. It's more likely there will be incidents that boost the prospects of the right wing and centre-right parties, he said.

Krantz said the collapse of the coalition, which brought together parties from the right wing through the centre-left, "was not unexpected. It didn't work out. There were a lot of tensions over social issues and to some extent over peace issues. So it collapsed."

And while some Israeli polls revealed that a plurality believe Netanyahu would make the best prime minister, Sucharov suggested Netanyahu's popularity resembles "a cult of leadership."

"I think the Israeli public associates the prime ministerial role with Mr. Netanyahu, given the landscape of the options available," she said.

Nadler believes growing concerns over the security situation since the summer have made "people shaky. They want a strong government." For them, "Netanyahu projects strength." ■

OPINION

Real leaders needed to heal Israel

Yair Lootsteen

I just got back from the doctor. Nothing serious. Just a regular check-up. But I've come home feeling terrible.

It's not me. It's what's going on in Jerusalem, my city. In this country.

In the waiting room, I met a young Orthodox fellow whom I recognized but couldn't quite place. He was there with his young, pregnant wife, and we struck up a conversation. Turns out he's a butcher at a supermarket I frequent. We talked about the quality of the meat he sells. He asked if I'd heard what's been happening at Rami Levi, another popular food chain in town: boycott demonstrations outside several stores because it employs Arabs. He'd heard of people outside one branch who'd been approached by others offering to pay for shopping carts full of groceries if they'd agree to shop at a supermarket not employing Arabs. Rumour has it some millionaire is footing the bill.

Acts of racism are becoming everyday occurrences here. In a hospital in Ashkelon, a patient refused to be treated by an Arab doctor. A group called Lehava prides itself on preventing assimilation. Its activists hit the streets evenings in Jerusalem, prowling for mixed Arab-Jewish couples and preventing people from taking rides in cabs driven by Arabs.

Ten days ago, arsonists set a Grade 1 classroom ablaze in Jerusalem's only bilingual Hebrew-Arabic school. Graffiti sprayed outside called for "Death to the Arabs."

Early Friday morning a couple of weeks ago, I walked through one of my favourite places in Jerusalem, the Machane Yehuda food market, getting things we needed for Shabbat. At a stall selling fresh herbs and spices, a salesperson was wearing a T-shirt proudly adorned with the slogan "Kahane was right" and a picture of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, who, among other things, called for the forcible deportation of Arabs from Israel.

I know these things don't occur in a vacuum. Terror against Israelis is up, especially in Jerusalem. People have been killed in several attacks in which Arabs used their vehicles to kill and maim Israeli pedestrians at train stops and bus stations. Others have been stabbed as they walked through the Old City.

In one particularly barbaric incident, two east Jerusalemites carried out an attack at a synagogue in Har Nof, a haredi neighbourhood in the western part of Jerusalem. Before being killed, they butchered early-morning worshippers, killing four of them, as well as a Druze police officer who came to their aid. They also injured many others, including Howie (Chaim) Rothman, a father of 10 who immigrated to Israel from Canada many years ago.

As of this writing, Howie, a classmate of mine at Bialik Hebrew Day School and the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto when we were growing up, is still in a medically induced coma.

I pray for his recovery.

And I pray for this country.

We Jews won't succumb to terror, but a law declaring Israel the nation state of the Jews is not smart right now, if ever, and will not bring tranquility. Nor will Jewish control of the Temple Mount.

We need leaders, true leaders, on both sides. A Mandela, a de Klerk. People who've been through the worst as bitter enemies and are willing to forge a better future together. To be conciliatory.

Neither PA President Mahmoud Abbas nor Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have it in them.

Maybe our new president, Reuven Rivlin, will be our man. A true believer in Israel's right to all of the Land of Israel, he has boldly made it clear he'll strive to make Arab Israelis full partners in Israel's future. Most recently, he cancelled a popular singer's performance at his official residence when it became known he had just released a song with racist anti-Arab lyrics.

At present, I see no Palestinian leader willing or able to take a daring leap of faith. I keep praying. ■

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Security issues return to the fore in election talk

BEN SALES
JTA, JERUSALEM

This government was supposed to be different.

During the last election campaign in 2012, Israelis seemed to tire of the existential issues that have plagued the country for decades. Barely anyone talked about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Long-simmering social tensions over the rising cost of living and the economic burdens of the underemployed haredi Orthodox community were going to finally get their due.

The Knesset's arrivistes – former television personality Yair Lapid and technology millionaire Naftali Bennett – swept into government by championing middle-class concerns. As members of the coalition, Bennett's Jewish Home party and Lapid's Yesh Atid worked on a number of social and economic initiatives, including efforts to lower dairy prices and curb growing housing costs.

Though Jewish Home vehemently opposed Palestinian statehood and Yesh Atid supported it, both agreed that haredi men should be drafted into the army and integrated into the workforce.

Less than two years later, the partnership has broken up over the very issues that the parties had downplayed. Bickering over peace talks began in the spring and the shouts grew only louder after this summer's war with Hamas. The recent crisis in American-Israeli relations further fanned the flames.

The rifts came to a head last week with the cabinet's adoption of the so-called nation-state law – a measure to enshrine Israel's Jewish character into law. Bennett supported the bill, while Lapid, the finance minister, and Tzipi Livni, the justice minister, were opposed.

In announcing on Dec. 2 that the coalition had faltered, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cited three areas of disagreement: building in eastern Jerusalem, demanding Palestinian recognition of Israel's Jewish character and maintaining a strong stance against Iran.

Netanyahu also singled out Lapid and Livni for their criticism of government policy after firing them from their cabinet posts. The next government, the prime minister vowed, would be like the previous one – a stable coalition of hawkish, conservative parties.

A voter casts his ballot during the last election in January 2013. FLASH90 PHOTO

Following the collapse of peace negotiations, the kidnapping and murder of three teenagers in June, the 50-day war in Gaza over the summer and the recent violence in Jerusalem – including the killing of four Jewish worshippers and a Druze policeman at a Jerusalem synagogue last month – politicians are focusing again on the issues that have always preoccupied them. After elections, scheduled for March 17, everything old will become new again.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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New government will need haredi support to form majority

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"The 2013 campaign was after relatively quiet years," Tal Schneider, author of the respected political website *Plog*, said. "Israel is not used to having such a length of time without any terror attacks. We're back to normal, [but] last time it wasn't on the agenda."

Recent polls predict the elections will be good for parties on the far left and right that have made the Palestinian conflict their principal issue. Surveys show Jewish Home jumping from 12 to 16 seats, even 19, and the far-left Meretz, which went from three to six seats in the last election, rising to nine. Every survey shows Yesh Atid losing seats.

Meanwhile, Likud's historic chief rival, the left wing Labor party, has returned to its dovish roots, electing as chairman Isaac Herzog, a former corporate lawyer who strongly supports peace talks with the Palestinians. Herzog replaced Shelly Yachimovich, an assertive former journalist who stayed all but silent on the Palestinian issue in the 2013 elections.

And that shared agenda of integrating haredim into the army and workforce? The realities of parliamentary politics will almost definitely make that a thing of the past.

If he wins again in March, Netanyahu has vowed to ally again with haredi parties who seek to roll back the law passed earlier this year requiring some haredi men to serve in the army. Even a left wing government would likely need haredi support to form a parliamentary majority.

Israelis, of course, still care about housing prices that have soared 80 per cent since 2007 and growing income inequality. An as yet unnamed party founded to address those concerns, headed by former Likud minister Moshe Kahlon, is expected to draw plenty of votes.

But Israelis aren't pitching tents on the street to protest economic policy as they did in 2011. This year, they have massed to support soldiers fighting in Gaza, pray for the kidnapped teens, oppose the nation-state law and protest the torching of a Jewish-Arab school.

"People vote by security," Schneider said. "They may say in the polls that they're more into the housing crisis, but it's really never about the economy." ■

Rivlin urges Israelis to go to the polls

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Increasing public distrust in politicians following the collapse of the ruling coalition could lead to low voter turnout in the upcoming elections, Israel's President Reuven Rivlin warned last Sunday.

"I am afraid that the public will abstain from voting because they no longer believe in them [elections]," Rivlin said during the Globes Business Conference in Tel Aviv.

"The public's distrust of elections is something that could damage our democratic system. I hope that everyone will go to the polls and vote according to their beliefs," he said.

The country's ruling government imploded last week as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired ministers Yair Lapid and Tzipi Livni, accusing them of plotting to undermine him amid a series of heated legislative battles. Each side accused the other of pushing the public into unwanted elections.

The Knesset dissolved itself earlier this week, paving the way for elections on March 17, just over two years since the last time Israelis went to the polls.

Rivlin called for politicians to make "difficult decisions" to commit to working together in ideological blocs instead of taking extreme positions.

The 2013 elections showed a slight increase in political participation, with a 67.7 per cent voter turnout, compared to 64.7 per cent in the 2009 elections.

Results from recent opinion polls reveal that 51 per cent of Israelis do not support the early elections, and a majority of those asked blamed Netanyahu and Lapid jointly for the coalition's collapse. ■

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US-Israeli tensions could figure prominently in vote

Obama administration may try to influence the results, expert says

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Just 20 months after the current government was sworn in, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired two of his top cabinet ministers, leading their parties to pull out of the government and the Knesset to vote to dissolve itself. A new date has already been chosen – March 17 – a few weeks before the Passover holiday.

The Israeli public is not happy about the election. A new poll shows that 57 per cent of the public thinks the elections are unnecessary. Fired finance minister Yair Lapid attacked Netanyahu for "dragging the country" into an expensive election, estimated to cost up to $500 million (US).

"The general feeling is that after the election we'll have the same government we have now," Guy Ben Porat, a professor of public policy at Ben-Gurion University told *The Media Line*. "The left are not very hopeful that things will change and people on the right already have power so there's no great motivation on either side for an election."

New contenders are already popping up. Popular former Likud minister Moshe Kahlon repeated that he intends to form a new party.

"I arrived at the conclusion that we need a different platform, with its own agenda and own people – innocent people with no foreign interests, professionals who are not afraid to serve people and not power," he told a group of students in Haifa. Kahlon is well-liked for encouraging competition in the mobile phone market that brought prices down dramatically.

In the previous election, Lapid, then a popular television presenter, took the electorate by storm, winning 19 seats in the 120 seat Knesset for his Yesh Atid party and becoming the country's finance minister. Polls show that Lapid's party will lose significant support in the next election.

Former minister of communications Moshe Kahlon meets with young Israelis at a pub in Tel Aviv on Dec 5, 2014. Kahlon is one of several new contenders popping up. FLASH90 PHOTO

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said he hoped Israelis will choose a government that will restart the peace process with the Palestinians.

"We hope that whatever government is formed is a government that will – or whether there are elections, that those elections will produce – the possibility of a government that can negotiate and move towards resolving the differences between Israelis and Palestinians, and obviously, the differences in the region," he said last week at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Eytan Gilboa, an expert on U.S.-Israeli relations, said Kerry's statement was a hint to Israelis not to vote for Netanyahu.

"The Obama administration may retaliate for what they perceive to be Netanyahu's intervention in the last U.S. presidential election (when Netanyahu openly supported President Barack Obama challenger Mitt Romney) and try to influence them here," Gilboa told *The Media Line*.

He disagrees with the conventional wisdom that there is no alternative to Netanyahu. He said that a centre-left bloc of the two fired cabinet ministers, Lapid and Tzipi Livni, along with the Labor party, headed by Isaac Herzog, could pull in a substantial number of seats.

"If the Obama administration wants to help the centre-left bloc they could invite Herzog to the White House," he said. "The centre-left is going to go after Netanyahu for the deterioration in U.S.-Israeli relations."

> *The centre-left is going to go after Netanyahu for the deterioration in U.S.-Israeli relations*
>
> **Eytan Gilboa, expert**

Israel's parliamentary democracy system means that voters choose a party, and the party with the largest number of seats puts together a coalition of at least 61 in the 120-seat Knesset. With the break up of the former alliance between Netanyahu's Likud and Yisrael Beitenu headed by Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman there will be more medium-sized parties.

"We used to have two big blocs – Likud and Labor," Gilboa said. "Now we have too many medium-sized parties that cannot get more than 20 seats. That is a recipe for instability and frequent elections."■

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ANALYSIS

The more Assad talks, the less he is likely to do

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

Syrian President Bashar Assad did not even attempt to suppress information on what appeared to be an attack by the Israeli Air Force Sunday on a weapons cache destined for Hezbollah.

In fact, Assad, who is currently in control of only a small portion of his country spread word of the attack far and wide, and officials provided regime-friendly media outlets with plenty of information regarding the strike, in an attempt to garner the support of the Syrian people.

This was reportedly not just a single shot, but a volley of at least 10 different bombardments aimed at destroying two arms warehouses, one near Damascus' international airport and the other at an additional airport in Dimas, east of the capital.

There were no injuries, according to reports, but nevertheless, Syrian authorities chose to issue speedy verbal responses to the incident, accusing Israel of "aiding terrorists" operating in the country. (Israeli officials declined to respond to the reports.)

Damascus' pointing finger should be seen in light of recent reports presented to the United Nations Security Council, which reveal numerous interactions between Israeli troops and rebel groups on the Israel-Syrian border over the past 1 1/2 years.

The co-operation between the IDF and Syrian opposition forces was well known within Israeli journalist circles, but the local media was prevented from publishing any details on the matter due to military censorship restrictions.

Assad's almost childish effort to rally the public in his favour, however, is highly unlikely to succeed. An examination of the responses to the airstrike on a variety of Syrian opposition sites, including secular ones, clearly shows that the loathing of the Syrian president is far greater than resentment of Israel.

These sites make fun of Assad for the cowardice he displays in the face of Israeli attacks, which have been reported for years, despite the fact that he has vowed to respond to aggression on Syrian soil.

"Not even a single bullet was fired at the Israeli regime," one of these sites exclaimed in a graphic with a picture of Assad in the background.

And so the question is whether the Syrian president will decline to respond now, as in the past, despite his grotesque portrayal by the opposition.

> *For now it seems Assad does not want to – or cannot – act against Israel*

For now, it seems Assad does not want to – or cannot – act against Israel. It can be assumed that, had the Syrian president been able to respond to the strike, he would have done so already rather than issue harmless statements. So, one can cautiously predict that Assad will once again opt to ignore the alleged Israeli attack and not risk trouble on an additional front.

And yet it should still be noted that in today's Middle East, it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict how a leader will react, despite a clear pattern in recent years.

Assad has another option, though.

He can respond to the strike, not directly, but through subcontractors, without leaving any unnecessary fingerprints. In other words, Assad can allow Hezbollah, or any other organization affiliated with him, to launch attacks on Israeli targets in the Syrian Golan Heights.

Following a strike on a Hezbollah convoy in Lebanon in February, the Shiite terror organization responded with a series of detonations of explosive charges along the northern border.

That case was different, though, as the airstrike that prompted that response was carried out on Lebanese soil, a development which Hezbollah has already clarified that it cannot accept.

Regarding attacks on Syrian territory, however, the Lebanese organization would apparently have no obligation to respond, and Hezbollah knows that any action on its part may complicate the security situation within Lebanon.

In addition, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah has recently been facing immense pressure from Russian officials to lower the flame on tensions in Lebanon.

Dec. 4, Nasrallah met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov in Beirut, and the two apparently discussed plans to restore calm in the country.

With this in mind, it's doubtful that Nasrallah will rush to the aid of Assad and rescue him from Israel. ■

Suspects arrested in arson attack

JTA
JERUSALEM

Several suspects were arrested in the alleged arson attack on a joint Arab-Jewish school in Jerusalem.

The suspects were arrested over a week ago, shortly after a fire was set in the classroom of the Max Rayne Hand In Hand Jerusalem School.

On Dec.7, the Petach Tikvah Magistrate's Court lifted a media gag order on the arrests.

A gag order remains in place on the exact number of suspects being held and details of the investigation.

A preliminary police investigation found that the blaze was set intentionally.

"Death to Arabs" and "There is no co-existence with cancer" were among the anti-Arab epithets spray-painted on the school walls.

The court on Sunday extended the remand of the suspects until Dec.11, and allowed the police and Shin Bet security service to continue to prevent the suspects from meeting with their lawyers, *Haaretz* reported.

The Hand In Hand Jerusalem School is Israel's largest joint Arab-Jewish school and the only such primary and high school in the city. Five Hand in Hand schools are located throughout the country. ■

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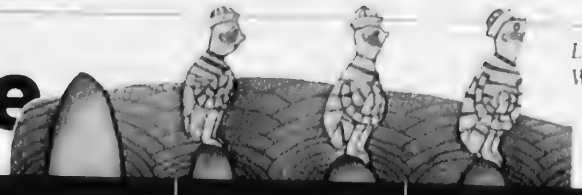


Leap Day by Yaara Eshet.
What's New. **PAGE 62**

Nelly Tagar plays Daffi, a young woman unhappy with her administrative role for the Israeli army in the new comedy *Zero Motivation*, pictured right with Dana Ivgy. FILMSWELIKE

Irreverent Israeli comedy about women in the army

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There are not many comedies set in the army. There are even fewer war-related films told from the female perspective. So, to see a comedy told from the viewpoint of three women serving in the Israeli Army is not just unexpected, but a welcome delight.

Zero Motivation, which opens at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto Dec. 12 before expanding across Canada in 2015, strays from the soldiers and focuses on the secretaries. The young female administrators in the film are unenthused to serve coffee and shred paperwork during their two years of mandatory service.

The comedy is divided into three stories. The first focuses on wisecracking best friends Zohar (Dana Ivgy) and Daffi (Nelly Tagar). Neither is very happy with working as a low-level secretary at an artillery base in the desert.

As the soldiers dodge mines in the battlefield, Zohar and Daffi compete in Minesweeper tournaments on their office computers. Their uptight senior officer, Rama (Shani Klein), has to keep the conflicts to a minimum so that she can get a promotion. However, her whining staffers are sometimes too much to bear.

Bored of her life in conscripted monotony, Daffi wants to be transferred to a post in Tel Aviv. Rama doesn't understand why Daffi will not just follow the orders she gets. "You're a spoiled brat with a made-up job," Rama shouts at her, referring to Daffi's office title as "paper and shredding NGO."

The film is the feature debut for Israeli writer/director Talya Lavie, who has earned comparisons to Lena Dunham. Lavie also based some of *Zero Motivation* on her own experiences during her mandatory stint working for the Israeli military.

However, even though the film focuses on the agony and apathy of young women, the deadpan humour and workplace shenanigans is more akin to *The Office* than *Girls*.

Like Dunham's HBO series, though, it may be hard for older audiences to sympathize with the entitled female unit. Younger adults will likely find the film's blend of slapstick humour and dark themes about male-female relations refreshing.

Lavie does not insert a great deal of commentary about the current tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. However, even though *Zero Motivation* avoids getting political, there are various dark themes to offset the office buffoonery.

Sexual assault, suicide and the supremacy of men in high-ranking military positions are all present within the 101-minute film. By framing the story through a female lens, the writer/director gives these topics the weight they deserve.

The performances are all top-notch, especially from Ivgy, who won an Ophir (Israeli film award) honour for best actress.

Ivgy's Zohar may be lazy and sarcastic, but the actor reveals vulnerability in the film's second chapter, which focuses on her character's mission to lose her virginity. A few glimpses in the mirror is all it takes to give us the same feelings of pressure and self-doubt as Zohar.

Many of the characters are oblivious to army protocol. There are a couple of moments that become far-fetched due to what the girls are allowed to get away with. After some seriously damaging acts, a few of the women get quite a lenient punishment.

Meanwhile, in one scene, a character fires a rifle at a male soldier staying in the base, but there are no repercussions or even alarms. Not a single military staff member runs out to deal with the incident.

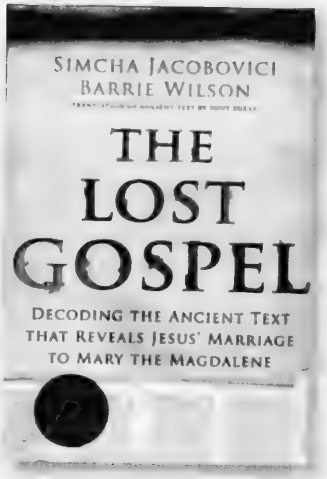
However, even with some irreverent jokes, the film never comes off as mean-spirited toward its characters. Lavie makes us recognize the humanity, as well as the motivations behind Zohar and Daffi's rule breaking.

Some may wonder why Lavie chose to spend time with women who give so little of service to the country, instead of focusing on the soldiers fighting on behalf of Israel.

But the troops are not her focus. Instead, she uses the female characters to focus on several military issues, like assault and gender discrimination, that do not often appear in war films.

Zero Motivation, presented in Hebrew with English subtitles, is a wry and witty look at war. It is also a fine introduction to one of the smartest and most original writer/directors to come out of Israel in some time. ■

Historical book about Jesus may find traction with Jewish readers


SIMCHA JACOBOVICI
BARRIE WILSON
THE LOST GOSPEL
DECODING THE ANCIENT TEXT THAT REVEALS JESUS' MARRIAGE TO MARY THE MAGDALENE

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Why would a book about Jesus (specifically, one alleging he was married and had children) written by two Jewish authors entice Jewish readers?

There are several reasons. For one, it presents Jesus as a human, an itinerant rabbi who bristled with foibles, emotions, even lust; it paints a picture of the bubbling politics and tensions between Jews and Romans of his day, culminating in the destruction of the Second Temple; and, as its publicity material breathlessly declares, it "changes everything we thought we knew about Jesus."

Perhaps this volume is best summed up by its very first sentence: "What you are about to read is a detective story."

And given the renewed general interest over the past few years in blockbuster musings on whether Jesus had a wife and produced a divine lineage, the collaboration between Simcha Jacobovici and Prof. Barrie Wilson may find traction among Jewish readers.

Even before it was released last month, scholars took swipes at *The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Sacred Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary Magdalene* (Harper Collins Canada.), sighing that there was little new in another entry in the crowded field of biblical conspiracy theories.

"The timing, just before Christmas, is highly suspect," groused one American New Testament scholar.

But Jacobovici is no stranger to controversy. He even seems to relish it. Best known as television's *Naked Archaeologist* and a three-time Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, he's triggered other uproars in academia by claiming to have found Jesus' family tomb and the ossuary (or bone box) that once held the remains of Jesus' brother, James.

This time, he and Wilson, a professor of religious studies at York University and author of *How Jesus Became Christian*, have pooled talents and curiosities to literally decode an ancient manuscript that's apparently been gathering dust in the British Library for 150 years.

The central thesis of *The Lost Gospel* is that the document, known as the *Ecclesiastical History of Zacharias Rhetor*, written in Syriac around 1,500 years ago, appears to tell the story of the Hebrew Bible's Joseph and his marriage to Asaneth, the daughter of an Egyptian priest. The text was apparently brought to the British Library around 1850 after its discovery in an Egyptian monastery.

But all is not as it appears. Using what they claim was a method employed by early Christians themselves, the authors decode the text to find that it was really about Jesus, his marriage to Mary Magdalene (who, based on the ancient manuscript, the authors contend was a gentile) and their two sons.

The claim is buttressed by two accompanying letters the authors say expressly state that there is hidden meaning embedded in the narrative.

Among the book's other dramatic claims is that more than being Mrs. Jesus, Mary Magdalene was in her own right considered a co-deity and co-redeemer by early Christians. Modern Christianity has short-changed her, the authors contend.

Jews should read the book because "anything that tries to underscore the humanity of Jesus [and] his Jewishness is important to a Jewish audience," Wilson, a member of Beth Tzedec Congregation, told *The CJN*. "From a Jewish perspective, seeing what I think is arguably the most important person who ever lived in human terms should be of interest."

Among those terms is sex and wedlock. The original manuscript "talks about how sexuality and marriage are healthy and redemptive, and that's missing from the pages of the Christian scriptures. We don't think that way. Judaism has a very healthy view of sexuality and marriage."

For Jacobovici, the subject, long considered in some Jewish circles to be taboo, is a no-brainer.

"Here you have a Galilean rabbi mentioned in the Gemara – often, by the way – who is worshipped by billions of people as God incarnate across thousands of years. How would I as a Jew not be interested in how that happened? How did it happen that a Galilean rabbi who ended up crucified and buried in Jerusalem is worshipped by billions of people as God? Isn't that an important, interesting question as far as Jewish history is concerned? How could you not be interested in that?

"I'm interested in reclaiming my own history. I see it as a natural part of my own history."

Jacobovici said he brings his "Jewish consciousness" to the table to consider a Jesus "not as divine but as a first century Galilean rabbi whose humanness makes him a legitimate subject for human traits." The book is a "historical analysis that's not filtered through Christian theology. I think for many Jews, it will be an eye-opener."

Portraying Jesus as human, Jewish and married – "any one of those three adjectives is fighting words to a very strong segment of Christians," Wilson noted.

The book also upends conventional thinking, Jacobovici said, in its portrayal of Jesus not as marginal but as fully embroiled in the turbulent politics of the day; of Galilee not as a backwater but as wealthy and cosmopolitan – "more like Tel Aviv today"; and as Christianity beginning not with Paul but with Jesus himself – and his wife.

By now, Jacobovici is used to blowback from scholars and others.

"Some attacks are thinly veiled anti-Semitism. You're not allowed to say that but I don't care. You have people mocking my kippah. You have people mocking the fact that I'm a child of Holocaust survivors. You have people saying I'm only in it for the money, [and] that I come around Christmastime."

As a non-academic, "I'm free to say what I want. And I can take it."

Wilson agrees there is a "personal vendetta" against Jacobovici by some scholars.

"I think they're jealous that he can ask questions and exposes things that various scholars have been unable to do. He always positions himself as an investigative journalist and he's extremely good at that, and he backs it up with uncomfortable details. He asks the questions that many academics are afraid to ask."

Wilson gently turned aside the question of whether he and Jacobovici have poked a hornet's nest. "To be slightly more neutral," he said, "I'd say we've acted as a catalyst for discussion." ■

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
CHAI TEA & A MOVIE SERIES

FÉLIX AND MEIRA

Canada 2014, 105 min
French, English, Yiddish
with English subtitles

Director: Maxime Giroux
Cast: Martin Dubreuil, Hadas Yaron, Luzer Twersky, Anne-Élisabeth Bossé

Event Date: Sunday, December 14

Two Screening Times: 1:00pm & 4:00pm

Location: Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. (North York Centre subway station)

Tickets: $15 Available at TJFF.COM or 416-324-9121 (Cash only at door, subject to availability)

Coffee and tea will be available in-theatre immediately prior to screening.

TJFF is proud to present this touching and evocative love story, direct from its successful debut at the Toronto International Film Festival, where it won the Canada Goose Award for Best Canadian Feature Film.

Hadas Yaron (the star of *Fill the Void*) is enchanting as a young married Hasidic woman with a child who is quietly searching for something. She meets Félix, an eccentric and penniless French Canadian, played with earthy charm by Martin Dubreuil. Set against the beauty of Montreal, *Félix and Meira* is a sensitive love story between two people from two distinct worlds. "In the light of Quebec's recent controversial legislation attempts, *Félix et Meira* is a timely reminder that there are different kinds of rights to freedom—the right to maintain long-held religious traditions, and the right to choose one's own identity" (Agata Smoluch Del Sorbo, Toronto International Film Festival).

Shown with two excerpts of the much-talked-about web series *YidLife Crisis*.

TJFF.COM

Movie explores relationship between Orthodox woman and secular man

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Orthodox Jews are not often the subject of feature films. But a French-Canadian drama about a relationship between an ultra-religious woman and a secular man grieving the loss of his father garnered strong buzz from 2014's Toronto International Film Festival.

Felix and Meira won the Best Canadian Feature Film award at the festival. It was the second Jewish-themed title in a row to take that prize at TIFF, after 2013's *When Jews Were Funny*.

The win may have been unexpected, as the film is restrained and low key. However, it was a deserved victory.

The film follows Meira, an Orthodox Jewish mother played by *Fill the Void*'s Hadas Yaron. She is uncomfortable with her religious identity. She has a husband, Shulem (Luzer Twersky), and child, but tells a friend she does not want to bear more children. She feels little emotional attachment to Shulem and commits small acts of rebellion, such as playing smooth soul records when he is out of the house.

Meanwhile, Felix (Martin Dubreuil) is a lonely man whose father recently died. He often sees Meira at a local bakery. In the wake of his father's death, Felix asks her for religious advice about how to pay respect to his dad.

What begins as a casual friendship becomes something more. He longs for her and tells Meira he hates being a bachelor. "What's it like to be single?" she replies. "I'd like to know what that's like."

As her relationship with Felix blossoms, Meira keeps some of her religious customs, but eschews others. She hesitates to meet Felix's gaze but she does not flinch when he touches her face. It is hard for Felix to figure out these boundaries, but it does not take much for Meira to let him in.

When they walk, talk and laugh together, it is a relief. His family is distant and he has no girlfriend, so he loves the company. Her love for her husband is barely there and she yearns for the slightest bit of freedom. When he plays music for Meira, her lips curl into a smile. His father did not smile at him often, Felix tells her.

Meira is mostly silent, observing the Orthodox Jewish community around her and pondering her distance from it. She must figure out whether to remain devout or abandon her husband for this new friend.

The romance may be forbidden, but *Felix and Meira* is far from a film meant to attract provocative reactions from Jewish audiences. Instead, it is a thought-provoking glimpse of how hard it is to remain religious, especially in a thriving multicultural centre like Montreal.

Hadas Yaron as Meira and Luzer Twersky as Shulem in *Felix and Meira*.

The drama is both a sensitive and daring look at the ultra-religious community. Writer and director, Maxime Giroux, explained before a screening of the film at TIFF, that living with Orthodox Jewish neighbours in Montreal's Mile End district inspired the story and setting.

Meanwhile, Yaron and Dubreuil are gripping in their performances. Due to the longing of both of their characters, the drama is mostly introspective. Both actors carry the sorrow in their faces.

In some scenes, Giroux keeps the camera on either Felix or Meira as they interact with a world that they do not quite fit in. We hear their heavy breathing and feel the weight of their sadness.

The director uses dim lighting, so that when Meira is alone in her home, there is an angelic white drawing her outside – a metaphor for her curiosity into the outside world. Giroux also lights up Mile End with moody blues, a reflection of his title characters' sadness and restrained desire.

The film, which has moments in French, Yiddish and English, is not an offensive portrait of the Orthodox community, although some may flinch when Shulem (Meira's husband) reaches a violent breaking point with one of the characters.

However, the film does not avoid Shulem's point-of-view. When he notices Meira's behaviour and meets up with Felix, he is very protective of his wife, knowing what it would mean to lose her.

Felix and Meira is a tense, moody, thoughtful film with excellent acting. It explores themes of love, identity and religious identity in a nuanced way not often shown on the big screen. ■

TJFF presents Felix and Meira for two screenings as part of its Chai Tea & A Movie screenings. Dec. 14 at 1 and 4 p.m. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Toronto. www.tjff.com

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

AGO TO PRESENT PHOTO EXHIBIT OF DAILY LIFE IN LODZ GHETTO

Incarcerated in the Lodz Ghetto in 1940, Polish Jewish photojournalist **Henryk Ross** was put to work as a bureaucratic photographer for the Jewish administration; covertly and at great personal risk, he took thousands of images of daily life in the ghetto.

Taken through cracks in doors or through Ross's overcoat, the photographs – which go on view next month at the Art Gallery of Ontario – capture the complex realities of life under Nazi rule, from the relative privileges enjoyed by the elites to the deportation of thousands to death camps at Chelmno and Auschwitz.

"Having an official camera, I was able to capture all the tragic period in the Lodz Ghetto," Ross later recalled. "I did it knowing that if I were caught my family and I would be tortured and killed."

Memory Unearthed -- The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross will feature more than 200 images never before exhibited in Canada, plus artifacts such as Ross's identity card and ghetto notices.

As the last remaining ghetto residents were being sent to their deaths at Auschwitz, Ross buried his negatives in the ground "in order that there should be some record of our tragedy. . . . I wanted to leave a historical record of our martyrdom," he later explained.

Among a tiny percentage of ghetto inhabitants to survive, Ross recovered more than 3,000 of his negatives after liberation, making his collection one of the largest visual records of its kind to survive the Holocaust.

In the 1950s he and his wife moved to Israel; he died in 1991. The negatives were gifted to the AGO by the Archive of Modern Conflict in 2007.

Accompanying the exhibition are several large colour photographs by contemporary Toronto photographer Yuri Dojc of abandoned Slovakian synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. Opens Jan. 31. www.ago.net

• • •

New in Print: Toronto Island resident **Linda Rosenbaum** has penned *Not Exactly As Planned: A Memoir of Adoption, Secrets and Abiding Love*, newly released by Demeter Press. A 1960s-era political refugee from her hometown of Detroit, Rosenbaum writes about her adopted son who is diagnosed with irreversible brain damage from fetal alcohol syndrome; the story, excerpted from the book, won the 2013 Canada Writes Readers Choice award for creative nonfiction. There is significant Jewish content in the book, Rosenbaum advises; she also writes about the American ex-pat community on Beverley and D'arcy streets in the 1970s. lindarosenbaum.com

• • •

Names in the News: Pulitzer-Prize-winning artist and graphic novelist **Art Spiegelman** is in Toronto next week for a press conference in advance of the opening of *Art Spiegelman's Co-MIX: A Retrospective* at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The show, which features the original *Maus* manuscripts as well as diverse works on paper, runs Dec. 20 to March 15.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema is screening the film *The Decent One*, a documentary portrait of Nazi Gestapo chief **Heinrich Himmler** featuring rare restored footage. In English and German, with English subtitles; winner of best documentary at the 2014 Jerusalem Film Festival. 506 Bloor St. W. at Bathurst. Dec. 12 to 18, various times. bloorcinema.com

• **Sisters of Sheynville** quartet headline a Yiddish-swing and klezmer Chanukah concert at Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Dec. 18. Latke lunch 12:30 p.m., concert 1 to 2:30 p.m. $10. Please preregister by Dec. 12, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** begins a new series on "Forbidden Desires: The Films of **Alfred Hitchcock**." $50 for five-part series, or drop-in $12. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays from Jan. 5 to Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m. Please register at 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Talisker Players present *Putting on the Ritz*, a concert in tribute to songwriter **Irving Berlin**, with mezzo-soprano **Whitney O'Hearn** and tenor **Bud Roach.** Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. Jan. 11 at 3:30 p.m. and Jan. 13 at 8 p.m. (earlier with pre-concert talks). www.taliskerplayers.ca

• Soulpepper Theatre is preparing to mount a new adaptation of **S. Ansky's** *The Dybbuk*, or *Between Two Worlds*, by award-winning Canadian playwright **Anton Piatigorsky**. The opening is slated for next May. This supernatural tale of powerful young love and spiritual possession is the most famous play in Yiddish literature. ■

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Singer uses music to inspire and unite

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For more than a decade, Jewish music superstar Yaakov Shwekey has performed for sellout crowds around the world.

He has dedicated his talents to brightening the lives of people with special needs and performing for soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces.

Shwekey will be featured at the Toronto Centre for the Arts at NCSY's annual concert Dec. 14. NCSY, the youth movement of the Orthodox Union, is dedicated to inspiring and educating unaffiliated Jewish teens.

"No matter what the illness, music brightens up anybody's soul," Shwekey said in an interview. "Music is a powerful tool. We have to inspire because music is inspiration."

Speaking of his performances for Israeli soldiers, Shwekey noted that he wants to express his great appreciation for people who give their lives every day for the people of Israel.

"Music can also unite people no matter what background they come from. That's what music is all about."

Yaakov Shwekey

He believes a singer has an obligation to do more than just give big concerts. "When we can do it, we can reach out to our brothers and sisters who are in pain and give them something to smile about."

Shwekey was born in 1977 in Israel and raised in Brooklyn. His father is of Egyptian and Syrian heritage and his mother is Ashkenazi. He combines both heritages in his music and performs in many different styles.

For a short time, he sang in the Miami Boys Choir and performed as a wedding singer.

His first solo album, *Shomati*, was released in 2001. He has since produced more than 10 albums, including a Middle Eastern-style album titled *Libi Bamizrach – My Heart is in the East*.

His extremely popular song, *Racheim*, composed by Pinky Weber, has lyrics from the prayer after eating. "It's not just a song. We connect with God and ask him to have mercy."

Shwekey believes that any prayer is better if you have a beautiful song with the words of the prayer in it.

His songs are generally in Hebrew with some English, Yiddish and Aramaic. His albums include *Cry No More*, *Kolot – Voices* and *Live in Caesarea*, and he performs on many others.

Shwekey now lives in Deal, N.J., with his wife, Jenine, and their four children. His wife is the founder of the Special Children's Center of Lakewood and Deal, with respite and support programs for children with special needs. Shwekey is a volunteer there.

He feels that the success he has experienced in his music career has come because of the work he does with these special children.

"I'm looking very much forward to singing and dancing in Toronto with everyone and uniting them to me."

"We are excited to welcome Yaakov Shwekey to our stage," says Rabbi Glen Black, chief executive officer of NCSY Canada. "His music brings out the joy of the Jewish experience and works hand-in-hand with our efforts to ensure that Jewish teens at a critical juncture of their lives feel pride in their Jewish identity.

"At a time in Jewish history when Jewish children have never been more at risk of dropping out of Jewish life, NCSY, with its many programs, has never been more vital.

"This concert is NCSY's way of bringing together the community to support NCSY's life-changing programs." ■

Yaakov Shwekey performs Sunday, Dec. 14, at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. For tickets, call Sonya Budd, 905-761-6279, ext. 226, or go online to www.ncsyconcert.com.

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Young actor gets rave reviews in Retreat

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Mara Zigler

Mara, at right, with the cast of *The Very Hungry Catepillar.*

In early September, up-and-coming actor Mara Zigler was working at her day job at a vintage clothing store in Toronto's Kensington Market when she got a tweet inviting her to an audition.

"I had no idea it would lead to a show," Zigler said. Nevertheless, she was pretty excited and she realized she had to get there fast. The first actor to read for any part has an advantage, she said. They "can't hear anyone else's voice do the part. That's how auditioning works."

Luckily, the store's owner, a former actor, was understanding and let her go. "I'll be back in three hours," Zigler told her boss as she hurried to get her bike. The effort paid off and Zigler landed the part of Kira in hot indie playwright Kat Sandler's 10th play, *Retreat*, a satire about four young professionals who are trying to make partner at a prestigious firm after year-long internships.

The play went from first-draft stage to full production in just over two weeks. "We were rehearsing and asking ourselves, 'Is this funny, is this a great play?' Lines were changing up until the last second," Zigler said. She added that it was exhilarating acting in the fast-paced and witty show.

Retreat, which ran for nine performances in September at the StoreFront Theatre in the city's west end, turned out to be a hit, and got rave reviews from critics at the city's major publications. A possible tour of *Retreat* is in the works.

Zigler, 25, said the play about the corporate world speaks to 20-35-year-olds. "It's relevant for anyone in our generation vying for work," she said, adding that the show's relevance to young audiences, who are not easy to attract to theatre, is what drew the critics. Zigler said that, generally speaking, theatre audiences tend to be older because young people can't afford the often high admission prices. And theatre competes with clubs and concerts for young audiences.

"There's so much going on" in the city, she said. Zigler has also done film work, playing the lead role in a short, *Mammary Gland Malfunction*, which is about to hit the festival circuit. A comedic coming-of-age story based on true events, the film is about a 15-year-old virgin, who starts lactating. The character, Corey, has to deal with all the usual problems a teenage girl has and she "has this weird problem. It's ridiculous, no it's amazing," Zigler said.

Her acting roots go way back to Camp Shalom, when she played a member of the T-Birds in *Grease*. She attended CHAT, where her drama class was an "amazing outlet," she said. In Grade 12, she had the role of the clock in *Beauty and the Beast*.

"That was my introduction to comedic theatre," she reflected at an interview in a coffee shop in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood. "That's always what my thing has been."

When Zigler was at CHAT, she knew acting was something she wanted to do, but she "wasn't sure how to make it into a career," she said. She applied to Dalhousie University in Halifax – a couple of friends were going there and she wanted to go far from home.

"I wanted to develop my own identity," she said. Initially, though, she was scared to apply to the university's theatre program, she said, and she took general arts and "learned to live alone" during her first year. She found the courage to audition for the theatre program at the end of her first year, and she said she clearly remembers the moment – she was shopping for a dress for her cousin's engagement party – that she got a call offering her admission.

After graduating with a degree in classical theatre, Zigler got a job with the Halifax theatre company Shakespeare By The Sea, playing Lucy in an original production of *Dracula*. Back in Toronto in 2012 and 2013, she performed in NewBorn Theatre productions in 2012 and 2013, including the show *Teach Me*, at the 2013 Toronto Fringe Festival. Zigler played Lauren in *Teach Me*, about a student who makes up a story about having a relationship with a teacher. *Teach Me* has "all sorts of secrets and lies that culminate into a disturbing ending," she said. Recently, Zigler went on a six-month tour with a children's puppetry theatre company, the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. They performed an adaptation of three Eric Carle stories, including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Zigler, her fellow puppeteer and a stage manager toured the northeast United States and Quebec, packing and unpacking the set and driving themselves to various cities.

"Kids are the best audience," Zigler said. They also performed in the Mideast, in Bahrain for a spring festival that included Eric Clapton and Gloria Gaynor.

Zigler is currently in Los Angeles, accompanying a friend who is shopping around a script and shooting test footage for a feature film that she is developing and starring in. The film, *Northumbria*, originally written as a play by Kelly McCormack, an award-winning actor and screenwriter, is about three British boarding school students in the south of England. "It is still being written and workshopped by her and I, and we have plans to shoot the first few scenes out here," Zigler said.

Zigler said she finds acting both terrifying and gratifying. Terrifying, she said, "because I don't know the next time I'm going to be working. I don't have a plan. I don't know where I'm going to be in the next five years." On the other hand, you feel "satisfied in every aspect of life when you come off stage and you know you've done good work and have affected people," she said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 11, 2014

New book filled with errors on Judaism

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TOTHE CJN

Is religion a force for good or for evil? Are people who sincerely follow religion more likely to live ethical lives or to commit horrendous acts of violence? If religions did not exist, would the world be more peaceful? More violent? And what role do these questions play in Judaism?

In her recent book, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, Karen Armstrong has taken on an ambitious project: analyzing the major religions of the world from prehistoric times to the 21st century to determine whether they, collectively or individually, form the root of human violence.

Armstrong is known for her vigorous defence of the belief in God against the critique of such writers as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. Here, too, she concludes that religion is not the cause of human violence. She feels that humans naturally tend to treat each other well and she attributes human violence to other factors. Before the invention of agriculture, she says, ancient hunter-gatherers were essentially non-violent. Human violence rose with the shift to agriculture, city dwelling and private property.

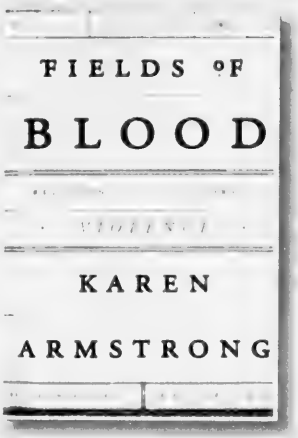
Few people are qualified to write knowledgeably about all periods of history and pre-history, and all major religions and cultures of the world, current and extinct. Armstrong attempts this, even throwing in a "theory of everything" to explain the root causes of human violence. A review in the *Washington Post* praised the book highly, calling it "both erudite and accurate, dazzling in its breadth of knowledge and historical detail."

I cannot imagine how anyone could feel qualified to determine whether such a sweeping book is "erudite and accurate." I hesitate to comment on the rest of the book, but I was not impressed with the section about Judaism.

Armstrong's retelling of biblical history, based heavily on biblical criticism, does not correspond well with the text of the Bible itself. Lacking expertise in the area of biblical criticism, she does not distinguish between consensus views of Bible critics and eccentric unconventional views. Her claim that the God of the Pentateuch [Torah] "is the intransigent enemy of agrarian civilization" fits in well with her thesis, but not with the Pentateuch itself or common scholarship on it. Most readers of the Bible would say that the God of the Pentateuch assumes that society will be agrarian and promises agricultural blessings to those who follow God's laws (Exodus 23:24, Leviticus 23:3-5, Deuteronomy 11:13-15 and many other passages).

She asserts that "the earliest [biblical] sources... do not mention the Ten Commandments being given to Moses . . .. The Ten Commandments would be inserted into the story later by seventh-century [BCE] reformers." This strange claim (neither traditional nor standard biblical criticism) reflects a belief, or perhaps I should call it a discredited prejudice, that Israelite ethics were primitive in the earliest days of the religion, only advancing as the years went by and reaching their alleged pinnacle in the New Testament.

She tells us further that "the 'scribes and Pharisees' of the Gospels [in other words, the rabbis in the Land of Israel in the first century CE] were another group of retainers who interpreted the Torah, Jewish custumal law, in a way that supported the [Roman] regime [of occupation]."



Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence
By Karen Armstrong,
(Albert A. Knopf)

Claims of this type, based, at best, on the flimsiest of evidence, have been offered for a few centuries by Christians with ambivalent attitudes to Jews and Judaism.

Clumsy errors abound, too. Armstrong claims that the Babylonian rabbis did away with the biblical concept of compulsory war, but the Palestinian rabbis "argued that Jews were still obligated to fight sometimes – but only in self-defence." Intrigued by the unusual and, as far as I know, unsupported claim that the Babylonian rabbis eliminated the concept of compulsory war (*milchemet mitzvah*), I checked her footnote, which cited three rabbinic texts, all written in the Land of Israel, not Babylonia, ostensibly to prove what the Babylonian rabbis felt.

But the most egregious error in the Jewish section of the book involves the biblical attitude to the *ger*, the stranger. Armstrong claims that the "priestly texts," which she sees as the most recent stratum of the Torah, "developed a remarkably inclusive vision... Instead of seeking to exterminate the *ger*, the 'resident alien,' as the Deuteronomists had insisted, the true Israelite must learn to love him." The claim that the Deuteronomists (the alleged authors of the book of Deuteronomy and some other biblical books) favoured extermination of the *ger* can immediately be recognized as foolishness by anyone who has read Deuteronomy. Loving the *ger* is not confined to priestly texts. Deuteronomy (10:19) commands us "Love the *ger*, for you were *gerim* in the land of Egypt." Deuteronomy in fact is the only book of the Bible to write that God, too, loves the *ger* (10:18). It does not suggest exterminating the *ger*, but rather giving the *ger* preferential treatment (e.g., Deut. 14:29, 24:19 and 26:11). This distortion again paints the Israelites of earlier biblical times as primitives who only slowly progressed toward an ethical worldview.

In 2012, I reviewed in these pages a book by Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, which systematically analyzed the duelling claims that Judaism promotes the value of peace and that it tolerates or even encourages violence. Eisen dispassionately lays out evidence for both sides, while Armstrong claims to know the truth. It's a shame that Armstrong did not rely on Eisen's book, which is truly erudite and accurate. ■

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Lots of secrets in Lori Rapp's kitchen

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A cookbook that goes far beyond being a cookbook, *Secrets From Lori Rapp's Kitchen*, was recently published in Israel and is now available in Canada.

Originally from Toronto, Lori Rapp, her husband Marvin and their five sons made aliyah in 1986. In their modest three-bedroom apartment in Jerusalem, they founded La Cuisine, a catering business that grew to include a bakery and two retail shops. It became a mainstay on the Jerusalem culinary scene for more than 21 years.

Since leaving the company two years ago, Rapp divides her time between teaching, baking and cooking, and working as a private chef.

This past summer, Rapp and her husband cooked in a dairy kitchen at Camp Moshava in Indian Orchard, Pa. for 1,400 people.

Secrets From Lori Rapp's Kitchen includes her bestselling recipes from La Cuisine. It also includes helpful kitchen tips and 70 pages of her memoir with humorous chapters such as, "Tell Me What You Eat, I'll Tell You Who You Are", "Stressed Is Just Desserts Spelled Backwards", and "Bureaucracy Is The Art Of Making The Possible Impossible".

The recipes are accompanied with colourful pictures as well as easy-to-follow and step-by-step details.

Rapp's book is filled with mouth-watering desserts, soups, main dishes, cheesecakes, quiches, non-dairy dishes, sauces, and salads.

She is the daughter of Holocaust survivors, Helen and David Slutzki. She says, "Growing up in a household where food reigned supreme, it was inevitable for me to find my true calling."

Rapp graduated from Associated Hebrew Schools and Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. She received a teaching degree and a master's in Jewish education and taught for six years at Associated and Adath Israel before turning to her lifetime love of cooking.

"I am an educator at heart," she says, "but my passion has always been food. I never dreamed that my hobby would one day become my full-time occupation, but it did, 21 years ago and counting."

Her joy for cooking is reflected in her variety of recipes, which also includes a preface with advice titled, "Before You Bake or Cook."

When asked about doughnuts and latkes for Chanukah, she said, "I didn't include them because I didn't want to fry. I sold tons of quiches and cheesecakes, our most popular dairy treats that people always take to parties."

The cookbook includes a variety of quiches including, Mediterranean, red pepper, spinach, Swiss chard, cherry/tomato, sweet potato, smoked salmon, tuna and more.

Here is Lori's Mushroom Quiche:

Quiche Dough

Makes one 11-in. quiche base or 24 mini quiches made in muffin pans.

- ❑ 1-½ cups flour
- ❑ ½ tsp. salt
- ❑ 4 oz. cold butter, in cubes
- ❑ 3-4 tbsp. ice

Mix the flour and salt briefly in a mixer with the paddle. Add the cubed butter and continue mixing until tiny crumbs form. Sprinkle in 3 tbsp. ice water and mix everything only until the dough starts to come together into a ball. Add a few more drops if needed.

Tip the dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap, knead the dough together a few times with your palms, and wrap it up. Refrigerate the dough until it's cold, at least one hour.

Preheat the oven to 350.

Whack the dough a few times with your rolling pin to soften it a little bit. Roll it out on a floured surface or between two sheets of baking paper and then line the tart pan with the dough.

Line the top of the dough with a large piece of aluminum foil. Press it in well with your fingertips, and especially hug the sides of the tart with the foil, folding it down over the outside edge of the pan and pressing it tightly. This will keep the dough up against the pan without the need to fill it with pie weights or dry beans.

Bake the quiche dough for 15-20 minutes until it is partially baked. Take it out of the oven, and remove the foil very carefully so as not to tear the dough as you lift it off.

Mushroom Quiche

- ❑ 12 oz. mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- ❑ 1 oz. butter
- ❑ 5 oz. shredded cheese – any tasty cheese works well here, preferably a Swiss-tasting one
- ❑ handful of chopped green onions

Sauté the mushrooms in a frying pan with the butter until the mushrooms are cooked. (They will be soft and lightly browned.) If the mushrooms release a lot of juice, pour the juice off or drain the mushrooms so you don't end up adding too much liquid to the quiche.

Scatter the cheese onto the partially baked quiche crust, add the cooked mushrooms, and then pour in the filling, below. Sprinkle the chopped green onions on top.

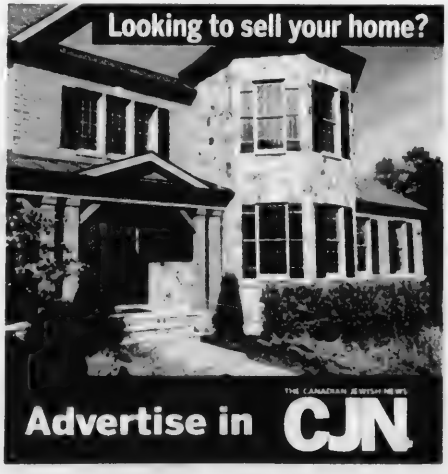
Basic Quiche Filling

- ❑ 1 cup heavy cream
- ❑ 3 eggs
- ❑ ½ tsp. salt
- ❑ generous pinches of pepper and nutmeg

Whisk the ingredients for the filling together in a bowl. Set it aside. You can substitute milk or yogurt for the cream (although cream is better). If you use milk, one or two extra egg yolks will enrich the filling.

Put the basic quiche filling into the partially baked crust, and bake for about 35 minutes, until the quiche is set and golden. ■

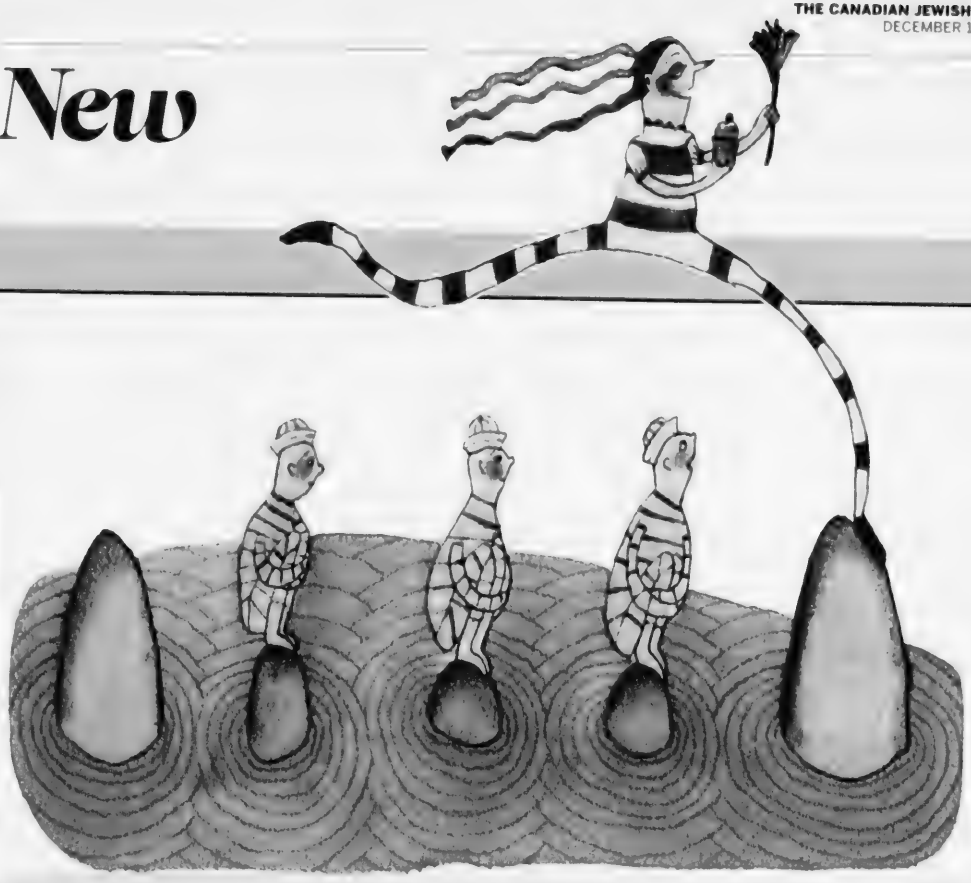
The book, *Secrets from Lori Rapp's Kitchen*, is available at Israel's Judaica in Toronto and on Amazon or contact lorimarvinrapp@gmail.com.



What's New

DEC. 11 - DEC. 18

by Lila Sarick



Leap Day

Holidays of the Week, paintings by Israeli artist Yaara Eshet, who moved to Canada 10 years ago, are on display at the Miles Nadal JCC until Dec. 28.

Friday, Dec. 12

RABBI IN RESIDENCE

Rav Ari Cutler, founder and director of the Yeshivat HaKotel Leadership Program is the guest speaker this Shabbat at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

SINGLES ONEG SHABBAT

Shaar Shalom Singles and the Intersynagogue Singles 50+ hold a Chanukah Oneg Shabbat, 8 p.m., 2 Simonston Blvd. 905-889-4975, ext. 72 or singles50plus@shaarshalom.ca

Saturday, Dec. 13

LATKE NIGHT

Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto holds a latke and game night for the whole family, 6:30 p.m. Register at www.bayt.ca.

THE ETHICS OF WAR

Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, professors **Asa Kasher** and **Daniel Lagacé-Roy** discuss "The ethics of war," 7:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.torahinmotion.org.

Sunday, Dec. 14

ARKADI & COMPANY

Club Chaverut presents music by **Arkadi & Company,** Dec. 14, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. 905-764-8141.

CHANUKAH CONCERTS

- The Toronto Heschel School presents the musical performance of the Chanukah story featuring **Kayla,** 10:30 a.m., 819 Sheppard Ave. W. $20 per family, RSVP concert@torontoheschel.org.
- Friends of Yiddish hold a Chanukah concert featuring **The Yiddish Swingtet** and **Kyra Folk-Farber,** 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $8/$15. RSVP **Sandy** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.
- The Morris Winchevsky School celebrates Chanukah with a sing-a-long led by **Marni Levitt,** 11 a.m., 918 Bathurst St. $5/$10. RSVP 416-789-5502 or www.mwstoronto.org.

RENEWING OUR SPIRIT

"Renewing Our Spirit," is the theme of a day-long series of lectures sponsored by Torah in Motion, 9:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Topics include "The Legal Rights of Ideological Minorities"; "The Sense of Humour in Judaism"; "The House of David"and "The House of the Hasmoneans." www.torahinmotion.org.

CHANUKAH DANCE

Singles in the Park (for single Jewish men and women over 50) holds a Chanukah party, featuring the Big Band music of the York Jazz Ensemble, Earl Bales Community Centre. Doors open at 7 p.m. $15 in advance,/$18 at the door. RSVP debbygo@rogers.com or 416-631-0005.

Deadline reminders:

Deadlines will change due to the winter holidays. The deadline for the issue of Dec. 25 is **Dec.9.** *The CJN will not publish Jan. 1. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 8 is* **Dec. 15.** *All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email* **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Monday, Dec. 15

CHANUKAH AND ENERGY SAVINGS

"Festive Chanukah and the marvel of energy savings," will be discussed by **George Canetti,** City of Toronto project manager Energy Efficiency Office, and **Sam Goldberg,** City of Toronto, energy consultant, 8 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

Tuesday, Dec. 16

CHANUKAH'S ROOTS

Rabbi Menachem Liebtag discusses "The prophet who stole Chanukah: The biblical roots of a rabbinic holiday," 8 p.m., Bnai Torah Congregation, 465 Patricia Ave.

MENORAH LIGHTING

Chabad of Thornhill Woods holds a community menorah lighting, with crafts, entertainment and refreshments, 6 p.m., North Thornhill Community Centre, 300 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Thornhill.

Wednesday, Dec. 17

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Anne Marie Desaulnier will discuss her work and teach bead embroidery technique for creating a picture frame, Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. To learn more, info@pomegranateguild.com.

JEWISH GENEALOGY

Sharoni Sibony discusses "One hundred years of the First Narayever Congregation," 7:45 p.m., Jewish Genealogical Society, Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave.

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

HEBREW CLASSES

Conversational Hebrew, Ulpan method with **Yael Lev,** intermediates Tuesdays

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

at 7:30 p.m.; advanced Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Two classes forming. Learn to read and write and Beginners conversational Hebrew. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

CHANUKAH CONCERT

The Maccabeats perform at a Chanukah festival, **Dec. 21**, 3 p.m. Chabad of Markham, $25. www.chabadmarkham.org or 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

INTERNSHIPS

Emunah Toronto is offering two internship opportunities for university students who would like to work in a religious Zionist setting at Neve Michael, an Israeli children's village, starting June 2015. Call 416-636-0036 or www.emunahcanada.org

MACCABI CANADA

Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

MUSIC AND TALK

Morasha presents a new series of conversations about the influences of Jewish music upon western classical music, led by **Jerry Fink.** Starts Jan. 7, Beth Emeth Synagogue, 416-789-7400.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN

The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- Dating in mid-life: A workshop for people over 40 who have been single for two years or more. Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids, a workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play Pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colin@mnjcc.org
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah lunch with 'Old Hollywood' live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Jan.14; seniors balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $20/$25. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Beginner and intermediate mah-jong starts Jan. 21.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents the art of Gustav Limt and Egon Schiele, Feb. 17, Feb. 24 at 1 p.m.
- The JCC book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 26, 1 p.m.
- Painting for beginners starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m.
- Moving meditation starts Jan. 8, 10:30 a.m.
- Portrait drawing and painting with **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** starts Jan. 9, 9 a.m.
- Yoga Cares is a program for teens and adults with an intellectual disability. Starts Jan. 6, 7 p.m.
- Stroke recovery, Parkinson's support and fitness group meets Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, 9:30 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Mondays, 11 a.m. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Subscribe today to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January-December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses the films of Alfred Hitchcock, starting Jan. 5, 1 p.m.
- Havdalah and Chanukah pool party, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.
- Chanukah Family Fun Fair, Dec. 14, 2-5 p.m. Food, crafts, games and more. $15/$20 per family.
- **The Sisters of Sheynville** perform a Chanukah concert, Dec. 18, latke lunch at 12:30 p.m., concert at 1 p.m. $10. Register by Dec. 12, ext. 0.
- *Holidays of the Week*, by **Yaara Eshet** is in the gallery until Dec. 28.
- Adult pottery classes for participants of all levels, start Jan. 6 at 9:30 a.m. or Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. Email pottery@mnjcc.org.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- All levels welcome for adult ceramics, Wednesdays, noon or 7 p.m.
- Enjoy a glass workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- Mah-jong classes start Jan. 13 at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental Mix Media," starting Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
- The JCC book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 27, 7 p.m.
- Adult art with **Melysa Gorlicky** starts Jan. 5, 8 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

ASK ELLA

Giving and receiving requires creativity

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

I married into a large, generous family who love to shower us with gifts. Whether it's for a birthday, anniversary, holiday or hostess gift, they never come over empty-handed. I don't want to sound ungrateful, but frankly I have no use for most of these things, and my cupboards are full of items I'll never use. I've even started a file where I keep all the gift cards. Between Chanukah and Christmas, we'll receive a whole new slew of items. I accept each one with a smile and a thank-you, but what am I going to do with all this stuff?

Bursting with Gifts

Dear Bursting with Gifts

Many people love to give. It's a chance to make someone feel special. Watching the reaction as a recipient opens a gift is fun and makes us feel good. However, most people have a hard time finding just the right gift, hence the tall carousels and walls of gift cards in many stores.

Re-gifting is an option. Many people have mixed feelings about re-gifting. After all, someone who cares about you put thought into buying this gift.

The fact is, most people today re-gift. It's even considered "green" – recycle, reuse, re-gift. It's acceptable, as long as you apply a few rules.

Know who the gift came from so you don't re-gift within the same circle of people. If you're not sure, do not re-gift that item.

Never re-gift something used or old.

Wrap the item with fresh paper or a gift bag, and add your own card.

Donation is also an option. If you have gifts in original packaging, you can donate them to Jewish Family & Child, shelters, fire halls, retirement homes, hospitals, etc. Make sure you're dropping off appropriate items at the various places by looking them up and calling first to check what they accept.

What about all those gift cards? You can put them to good use, too. There's a company called cardswap.ca that gives you the option to redeem all those unused gift cards.

Turn those dollars on your gift cards into charitable donations. Email fundraising@cardswap.ca for details.

With a little organization, effort and thought, you can put those gifts to good use and empty your cupboards at the same time.

Dear Ella,

It's that time of year again when I spend my hard-earned money buying presents for my nieces and nephews whose houses are already packed with toys. They have so much already, they don't appreciate anything I give. I'm sure my gift will get opened and then never looked at again. As for the adults, what do you buy someone who has absolutely everything? I hate shopping and would love to get together without this added stress, but I don't want to sound cheap.

What to Buy This Year

Dear What to Buy This Year,

All the work and preparation that goes into the holidays is for the final result. Families get together for Chanukah, eat latkes, light candles and, yes, give gifts – it's all part of the holiday.

Gift giving is usually for the kids more than the adults, but many families do gift exchanges for adults as well, especially if there is someone in the group who celebrates Christmas at the same time.

No matter how many gifts a child has, they love the surprise of opening another one. Will they ever play with the toy you got them more than once? Probably not. It's up to the parent to put away many of the toys and bring them out one at a time when the child is not overwhelmed and can appreciate it. Sometimes, kids get so much that parents don't get to the unopened gifts, in which case that toy can be donated.

For the adult that has everything, why not give a gift that can be paid forward? You can purchase a gift card from Canadahelps.org, then personalize it, print it, and the recipient can use it to donate to any cause close to their heart. It's a win-win for the giver, recipient and charity with the added bonus of a tax receipt. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

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Family Moments

We have at least 23 reasons to celebrate. Happy birthday to our daughter, Jordana Rosen. May all your dreams come true. Love, Mom and Dad

Mazel tov to Goldie & Shelly Hershon on your 55th anniversary, Dec. 6. Wishing you good health and happiness. With love from your children.

Happy 85th Birthday Frances Arzem! Mazel tov and best wishes, may you continue to be a source of inspiration to us all for many more years to come.

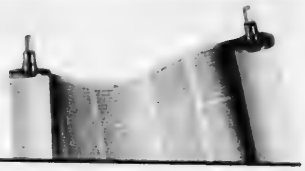
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב

Parshah

Vayeshev | Genesis 37:1 - 40:23



Rabbi Ilan Acoca suggests the struggles Jews face today began in the book of Genesis
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explains our desperate desire to find a home
Rabbi Catharine Clark finds comfort in Jacob's apparent mistakes

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

Our sages (Bereshit Raba) teach us "*Maaseh avot siman labanim*," whatever happens to our ancestors, will happen to us. In other words, history repeats itself. The struggle and turmoil that Jews are experiencing today are not new phenomena. This struggle started in the book of Genesis.

Genesis describes quarrels that still exist today. The Torah describes Rebbeca's pregnancy by stating "*Vayitrotzetzu habanim be'kirbah*" – "And the children struggled in her womb" (Bereshit 25:22).

The Ben Ish Chai teaches that the word "*be'kirbah*" (in her womb) seems to be superfluous. The word *kav* lies within Rebbeca's (Rivka's) name and it shares the same gematria as *emunah* (faith). Esau's and Jacob's struggle within Rebbeca's womb was because of their different faiths. As the commentators note, Jacob wanted to leave the womb when his mother neared a house of learning, and Esau wanted to leave when she approached a house of idolatry.

This message is extremely pertinent after the bloody massacre of innocent holy souls that took place recently in Jerusalem. And the question is, what are we supposed to do?

The answer lies in the words of the commentators mentioned above. Jacob wanted to leave his mother's womb when his mother neared a house of learning.

I believe that in these difficult times when we can't make any sense of what's going on, we have to look into our inner selves and find our "houses of learning" that symbolize our spiritual state. The same way that the placenta nourishes the fetus, our *neshamah* is nourished by our Jewish roots.

At this challenging time we have to turn to God for guidance and direction.

May these words be in memory of Rabbi Aryeh Kopinsky, Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, Rabbi Kalman Levine, Rabbi Moshe Twersky and Zidan Sayif, and for the speedy recovery of Chaim Yechiel ben Malka, Eitan ben Sarah, Shmuel Yeruchum ben Beila, Avraham Shmuel ben Sheina, Aryeh ben Bracha. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

After fleeing his brother Esau, working for his uncle Laban, marrying multiple wives, fathering many children, returning to Canaan, wrestling an unnamed man at night, re-encountering his brother, responding to the rape of his daughter, receiving God's reaffirmation of the covenant, witnessing the deaths of his father, Isaac, and his beloved Rachel, as well as the birth of his "baby" Benjamin, the Torah tells us that "Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived [*be'eretz megurey aviv*]."

A classical midrash, cited by Rashi, highlights the word *megurey*, whose root-stem *gur*, implies a temporary residence. Unlike his father, who never left the land of Israel, Jacob had been a wanderer, travelling from Be'er Sheva to Haran before taking up residence in Shchem. Perhaps he imagined he would now settle down. But there would be further disruption.

The Zohar, the central text of Jewish mysticism, relates the phrase *megurey aviv* to the word *magor*, fear, suggesting that Jacob was aware of his father's fearful relationship with God, also described as *pachad Yitzhak*. As Jacob struggled with the sense of awe that dominated his father's life, he sought to find a way to serve God out of love.

Rabbi Yitzhak Abravanel sees this fear linked to the wandering of Jacob. Abravanel was himself an exile from Spain. He understood that "dwelling" might appear secure, but that it was not necessarily permanent. Jacob's awareness of this uncertainty contributed to his anxiety. He desperately wanted to feel at home.

Contemporary research tells us that geographic mobility contributes to a disconnection from the Jewish community. Our wanderings contribute to spiritual anxiety and uncertainty. We are challenged to find a way to settle our bodies, so that our souls can find a home with the Holy One. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto. Follow him at www.beth-tzedec.org and https://www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

In a dramatic moment in this week's parshah, Jacob's sons present him with Joseph's bloody tunic. Upon seeing this apparent evidence of his favourite son's death, Jacob responds with the overstated pathos that typifies his lifelong response to bad news. He refuses to be comforted and says, "No, I will go down mourning to my son in Sheol."

In his response, Jacob is wrong about many things. He incorrectly predicts what the rest of his life holds for him. He lives many more years, including 17 years in the land of Egypt in the company of his beloved Joseph. He incorrectly predicts how he will feel for the rest of his life, believing he will be overwhelmed by constant grief. Even while he still believes Joseph to be dead, he doesn't spend his remaining years mourning Joseph. Rather, his attention for a favoured son is refocused onto Benjamin. He's even incorrect in his understanding of the present. Joseph is not dead. In fact, at the moment Jacob is certain that Joseph is dead, God is with Joseph in the house of Potiphar, ensuring the success of all Joseph's endeavours.

The contrast between Jacob's response and reality holds an important message for us. There will be times in our lives when we receive tragic news and, unfortunately, unlike for Jacob, often this news will be accurate. Nonetheless, in the moment of overwhelming grief upon hearing the news, it's likely that our predictions of how we'll feel in the future won't be correct. We're only human, and we don't know the future. We're more resilient than we know, and we often fail to account for the comfort that will be provided by God and our community. In the moment of receiving bad news, may there be hope and comfort in remembering how wrong Jacob was. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ontario.

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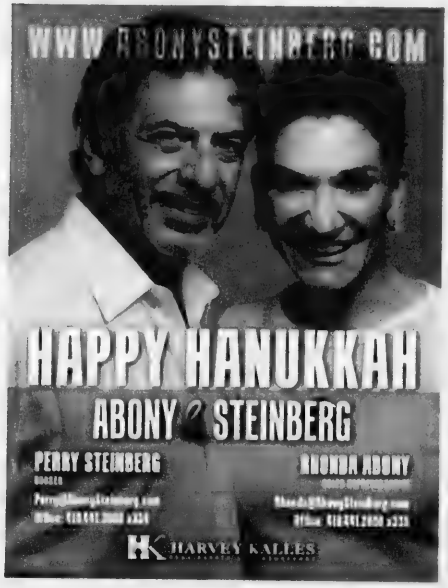

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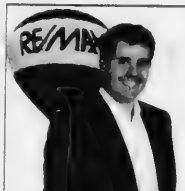

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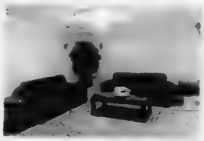

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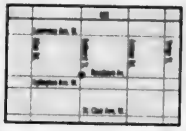

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Jewish quartet clash on the beach in Argentina

PAUL LUNGEN
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Josh Binstock, left, and Sam Schachter flash their medals from a beach volleyball event in Qatar.

It wasn't too long ago that the beach volleyball duo of Josh Binstock and Sam Schachter were new to the Canadian and world beach scenes. Not new in terms of never playing the game at an elite level, but new as partners together.

It took a while to iron out all the kinks and to get on the same page, but lately the team have been tearing it up at world beach volleyball events. They recently finished first at the 2014 FIVB Beach Volleyball Open in Parana, Argentina, and last week they were the silver medallists at a world beach open in Qatar.

En route to their victory in Argentina, the Canadian Jewish duo twice duelled with – and defeated – the Israeli pairing of Sean Faiga and Ariel Hilman. Although no one keeps official statistics of this sort of thing, it's likely the first time four Jewish guys contested a beach volleyball contest at such a high level.

"We knew them," Binstock said on his return from Qatar a few days before their next event in Trinidad and Tobago. "We saw them earlier in the slam. They got a lot better. They're very talented.

"We socialized with them. They're good guys. We obviously had Jewish bonds," he added.

According to a report on the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) website, Faiga and Hilman are touted as the new face of beach volleyball in Israel. Their goal is to compete at the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil.

In the opening round against the Israelis, Canada prevailed in a tough three-game set, defeating Faiga and Hilman by two games to one. Schachter, 24, and Binstock, 33, dropped the first game 23-25 before winning the next two by scores of 21-15 and 15-11.

For the Israelis, it was their only loss of the tournament – until they met Binstock and Schachter again in the quarter finals. In the knockout round, the Canucks dispatched the Israelis in two games, by scores of 21-14 and 21-15.

From there, Binstock and Schachter advanced to the semis, where they took three games to defeat the German duo of Sebastian Fuchs and Thomas Kaczmarek.

In the finals, they played the Gimalt cousins, Marco and Esteban, from Chile.

"They're top 10 in the world," said Binstock.

Going into the gold medal final, both teams sported perfect 6-0 records. But in the gold medal game, the Canadians got up early and never looked back.

"We were on our game in all areas," Binstock said. "Sam was serving unbelievable. My block was good. It was pretty much all cylinders firing."

In the end, the Canadians came out on top, winning in consecutive games by scores of 21-14 and 21-12.

It was their first world tour win and the first time in 18 years that a Canadian team won a world tour event.

As the competitive beach volleyball season winds down, Binstock's and Schachter's skills and tenacity have begun to pay off.

In their last three grand slam or world tour events, they've finished fourth, first and second. That's a big improvement over their first foray into open or grand slam events. Last year in a grand slam in Sao Paulo, they finished 33rd.

Their first international competition together was in 2013 in a NORCECA Continental Cup event in Cuba. They finished second.

In the tougher grand slam event later that year in Sao Paulo, they finished 33rd. At an open event in Fuzhou, China, earlier this year, they were 25th.

They've done better in NORCECA Continental Cup events, finishing with gold, silver and bronze medals.

The two were part of the Canadian indoor volleyball team at last summer's Maccabiah Games in Israel.

From Argentina, Binstock and Schachter caught a red eye to Doha, Qatar, for the Qatar open. Not many of the other teams competing in Parana did so. Most were concerned that jet lag would affect their performance.

It did, acknowledged Binstock, who played for Canada at the 2012 Olympic Games. "We were pretty destroyed from Argentina. By the quarter finals, "we just ran out of gas."

But their mental toughness proved to be the difference. Despite their fatigue, they gutted out a strong performance.

"We knew going in we wouldn't be able to play our best. We knew it was not going to be pretty. We ground it out through adversity," he said.

Binstock said they've had some slow starts in major tournaments before, but with success has come an infusion of confidence.

"Now we go in believing we can beat any team on any given day," he said. "It's kind of a theme for us, that no matter how bad things are looking, we can turn it around and win the match." ■

Yossi Klein Halevi: I was moving toward the fringe

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

What did you do?

It began incrementally in New York City in the 1970s. We started with non-violent civil disobedience – sitting in the streets, blocking traffic, taking over offices that related to the Soviet Union, commercial and cultural offices. Then the next step was breaking up concerts of Soviet artists.

I threw chicken blood at a Ukrainian dance troupe.

One time I brought in a fake suitcase bomb to a Soviet cultural performance. We phoned in a bomb threat, but it didn't succeed.

Gradually I was moving more and more toward the fringe. I was ready at one point to get involved in planning terrorist acts. By that time, the movement was disintegrating, and I never made the final descent into terrorism. But I saw very clearly in my own psychological trajectory how easy it is to take one step after another.

Do you believe there's a direct line from those days to Baruch Goldstein to the Rabin assassination and the burning of the Palestinian teen this past summer?

Very much so. I think that what we were responsible for is breaking the first barrier – the notion that Jews don't do X. When I was growing up, Jews did not engage in violence for a political cause, at least not as Jews.

The terrible line was crossed in January 1972 when a smoke bomb was thrown into an office in Manhattan that dealt with the Soviet-American cultural exchange and a secretary died of smoke inhalation. It turned out she was Jewish.

I was ready to rationalize that murder as collateral damage in our liberation struggle for Soviet Jewry.

But I realize now that something was beginning to gnaw at me. That was the beginning of doubt. That event was the moment when I first began to question.

The instances of violence you've referred to take place over more than 40 years. How can you deduce a trend from that?

The link here is Meir Kahane. He moved from the United States to Israel in 1971 and brought his culture of violence to Israel.

Those in Israel responsible for the horrific acts of violence we've seen periodically, one way or another were influenced by Kahane, or by the atmosphere he created. Certainly Baruch Goldstein, who murdered 29 Muslims at prayer in Hebron in 1994, was a direct disciple of Kahane.

Yigal Amir, who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, was an indirect disciple of Kahane. He was actually influenced by Goldstein.

As far as the burning of this boy, we don't yet know what influenced the three young men accused of the atrocity. We're waiting for the trial. But there's an atmosphere that's been created. There is a breaching of moral, legal and psychological limits.

Rabbi Meir Kahane is the common link in the violence on Judaism's fringes, commentator says.

> *I was ready at one point to get involved in planning terrorist acts... I saw very clearly in my own psychological trajectory how easy it is to take one step after another.*

Isn't that just among a small segment of the population?

Israeli society as a whole was horrified by every one of these acts of violence. Of course it's a fringe. But my question is, how does this fringe emerge, how is it being nurtured? The fringe is growing.

You've said Israel is becoming more and more isolated. Why is that?

We've fought against pariah status from the very founding of the state. The Arab world has used various weapons against us – conventional warfare, terrorism, boycotts. The tragedy we are facing today is that what was once an exclusively Arab and Soviet campaign to isolate Israel is spreading in the West. The delegitimization of Israel is becoming legitimate in polite circles in the West.

The question is why. First of all, most of the international community ignored the fact that Israel repeatedly offered to end this conflict and to empower the Palestinians.

It's a combination of faulty memory, animus toward Israel and tremendous success for the Palestinian propaganda machine, which doesn't stop for a moment.

What can be done about it?

People often ask me when I lecture, why isn't Israel's information campaign more successful.

The reason for that is that the Palestinians need only three words to make their case: occupation, apartheid, expulsion.

We have a much more complicated story to tell. I think we have a profoundly truthful story to tell, but it requires explaining what happened with UN partition in 1947. And as soon as you start talking about UN partition in 1947, you're dead in the era of social media.

We need multiple strategies. We need to tell our story quickly and we need to tell our story deeply.

There's one more piece in this: the fact that the Israeli government continues to expand in the settlements is simply incomprehensible to me. Now, I'm separating that from the question of whether we have the right to be there.

We just fought a brutal 51-day war in Gaza. I make no apology for fighting that war. That was a war of necessity for Israel. It was a just war. But to come out of that war and then the first announcement of the government is expanding settlements in Gush Etzion. Have they lost their minds?

This government, which in other ways I support, is acting in a deeply self-destructive way to Israel.

What do you make of the progressive left's criticism of Israel?

You say progressive left. I think the left in many ways is deeply reactionary, in the sense of limited vision. To look at the world, to look at reality through ideological blinders is to impose wishful thinking on reality.

The reality as most Israelis today know it is a combination of left-wing and right-wing insights. The left was correct about the dangers of occupying another people. The right was correct about the impossibility of reaching an agreement with the Palestinian national movement that denies our legitimacy in any borders. So most of us in Israel today, and I very much include myself in this, are neither left or right, but a mixture of both. We're centrists.

The story I tell in *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist* is the story of how I moved from a rigid ideological worldview to a centrist worldview that tries to understand the world as it is, and how to navigate in reality. ■

Jewish identity: in those days, as now

Backstory

YEDIDA EISENSTAT

One of the reasons that Chanukah is among the most-observed Jewish holidays across denominations is because it's a celebration of Jewish pride. After all, the main mitzvah of the holiday is to place candles in our windows to publicize the miracles of the historical Chanukah, of what God did for the Jewish People. We thereby re-enact the celebratory rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, tying our present to the triumphant Maccabean past.

The context of the historical Chanukah that we celebrate today was the Jewish identity crisis of the 160s BCE. After Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire in 331 BCE, Judea came under the rule of the Greeks. At the time, the boundaries between Jew and Greek were not always clear, because one became Greek by adopting Greek language and customs. While there were certainly many Jews who actively resisted Hellenistic influence, there were plenty of others who were quite open to Greek culture's ideas and influences.

The Jewish playwright Ezekiel even used the genre of Greek tragedy to write the play *Exagoge*, retelling the story of the Jews' exodus from Egypt in Greek! To be sure, some of the Jews who were open to Hellenism's cultural influences drew the line when it came to polytheistic worship and rejected Greek religion, but others did not. In their attempts to become fully Hellenized and their rejection of Second Temple-era Judaism, some Jews went so far as to try to reverse their circumcisions, the physical mark of God's covenant with Abraham.

In 175 BCE, the Greek Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV came to power and ended the earlier policy of religious tolerance. For unknown reasons, he looted the Temple and banned Jewish circumcision, festival and Sabbath observance, and Torah study. When Antiochus rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem to Zeus – making it impossible to worship God – and began to compel Jews to offer sacrifices to Zeus, some Jews turned to violence to defend their faith and traditions.

Led by Mattathias and his son Judah of Modi'in, they led an effective and ultimately successful guerrilla war against the Greeks.

Until Antiochus began his program of religious oppression, the majority of Jews throughout the ancient world found their own ways to mediate between complete resistance to Greek culture and total assimilation. The same is true of us today. As Canadian Jews, we, too, adopt and adapt elements of Canadian culture as we participate in society. In so doing, we prioritize the different aspects of our identities – Canadian and Jew – as needed. This raises a few questions: What makes me Jewish? What makes me Canadian? What am I willing to sacrifice to be Canadian? To be Jewish? Am I identifiable as a Jew? Do I want to be? When I travel, do I pin a Canadian flag to my bag? A Star of David? When these identities conflict with each other, which takes precedence? Why?

We celebrate the Maccabees for both their military success against the Greek oppressor and also for their religious zealotry, their insistence on maintaining and preserving the traditions and beliefs of their ancestors. Two ironies of history bear mentioning. In order to win the war, the Maccabees reached out to the burgeoning Roman empire for military support, of whom the Greeks were quite afraid. This marked the beginning of the Jews' tragic relationship with Rome, the empire that would ultimately destroy Jerusalem and the Second Temple in the year 70 CE.

The second irony is that after the war with the Greeks was over, the Maccabees took over both the religious and temporal leadership of Judea. There is some evidence that they resisted foreign influence, but they also gave their children Greek names, minted coins after the Greek model, and built palaces and tombs in the Greek style. How can we reconcile this apparent inconsistency?

Maybe the solution is to realize that the boundaries between the different and competing aspects of our identities are not well-defined. And Chanukah is the time to reflect on the values and identities that make us who we are. ■

Yedida Eisenstat is an assistant professor of Jewish Studies at York University.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

In Loving Memory
of our Beloved Mother and Bubie

BINA (SEGAL) POSMANTIER ז"ל

19 Kislev, 2004

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Shayna, Jeff, Bayla, Myles, Maddie Appleby
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN.

The rabbi who wouldn't backcheck. Fiction by Jay Teitel. **Page 14**

JIAS makes immigrants feel welcome by Mordechai Bur-Dat. **Page 10**

Examining the widespread media bias against Israel by Barbara Kay. **Page 28**

And more...

CHANUKAH GREETINGS

Miracle of the latke

GEORGE BERNSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My brother and I were surgical residents at the University of Indiana Hospital in the early 1950s in Indianapolis, Ind. When not on call, we would conduct Kabalat Shabbat services at one of the Jewish nursing homes. High school kids would visit the home on Jewish holidays.

A 16-year-old redhead named Rachel told us that their visits seemed not really helpful as the seniors sat in their wheelchairs oblivious to their surroundings and our visits. In frustration, a "council of war" was called, and this is what happened.

They came to visit the home on Chanukah and Rachel asked "who in the room baked the best potato latkes. We would really appreciate your recipe."

In 1/10 of a millisecond, heads lifted and chaos erupted as all shouted their secret recipes.

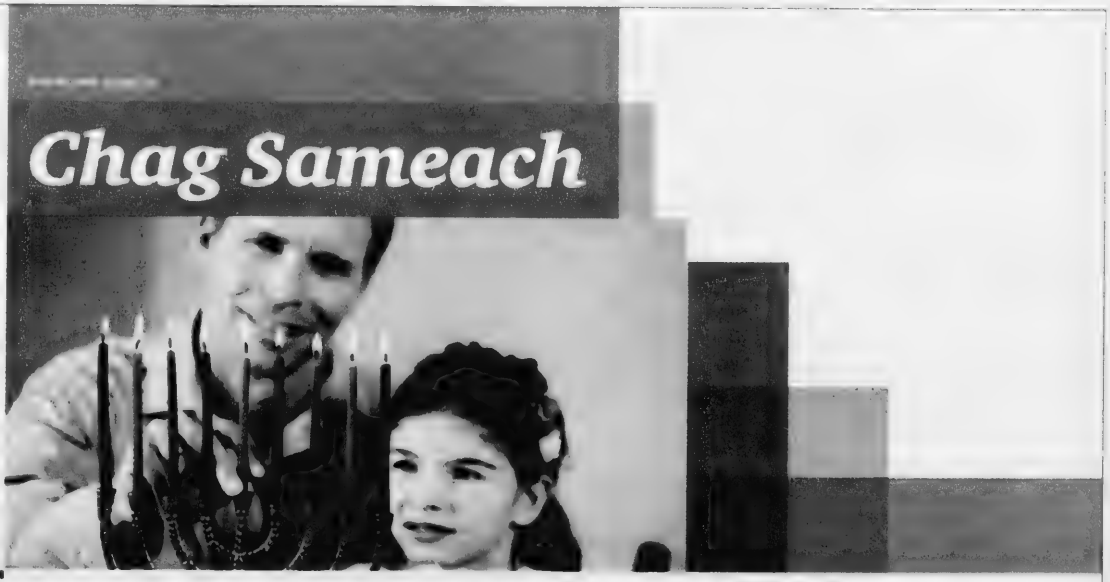
This scenario repeated at every holiday. Mouth-watering recipes would fill the room – blintzes, challah, gefilte fish, rugalach, fruit-filled donuts, carrot tzimmus, cholent – you name it.

> *Heads lifted and chaos erupted as all shouted their secret recipes.*

That Chanukah the students passed out multi-coloured dreidels, little toy menorahs, and red ribboned boxes of sweets. No one ever saw smiles so wide.

I had heard that Rachel and her family made aliyah to Israel, married a chef and became a very popular caterer. ■

George Bernstein, left, with his brother Merton Bernstein



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May this Festival of Lights be especially happy and healthy for you and your loved ones.
Happy Hannukah from PwC.

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The Maccabee of Montreal

FRANK LEMCO
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Where did Ike Klein came from, this defender of the Jewish faith? Some said he was born in Minsk. Others suggested that he immigrated from Kamenetz-Podolsk. But since he referred to meat in Yiddish as *flaish*, instead of *fleish*; hot as *hais* in lieu of *heis*, and fish as *fis*, we decided that he was from Lithuania (a Litvack). If truth were told, it no longer mattered, since one winter day he became our hero. After that, we called him the Maccabee of Montreal.

It was December 1933 and the streets were nearly empty. It was the Great Depression and no street lamps were glowing. The city was nearly bankrupt, unable to pay the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company, even for a few hours of light. Only a few fools dared to face the ice cold night (22 degrees below 0 F). However, since it was the first night of Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Light, Ike Klein, a diminutive mens clothes cutter, braved the Arctic weather and wandered up and down Jeanne Mance Street, carrying an orange Chanukah candle to light his way. Before it flickered out, he managed to light another one from its wick.

Like the rabbi in his former shtetl in Lithuania, he wanted to make sure that all Jewish homes were celebrating, and making the holiday relevant by lighting menorah candles. He recognized Jewish homes by mezuzahs on their doorposts. When he found no light in a window, he rang the doorbells and offered Chanukah candles for eight days. Sometimes, he left several dreidls for young children. However, when Jews relocated, they never removed their mezuzahs. Thus, he often found Christians dwelling in these homes during his nocturnal visits. As a token of seasonal good cheer, he presented the neighbours several white votive candles, so that they might fete their Christmas.

To keep himself warm, Klein chewed on a latke left over from dinner, which he washed down with a slug of vodka. He thought of himself as the bearer of goodwill.

"It's not like Yom Kippur where you sit in synagogue and fast," he reflected. "It's a time of joy, remembering how a small Jewish group led by a ragtag Maccabean army, beat back, in a stunning victory, the Hellenic hedonists ruled by Antiochus IV.

He thought about how the rabbis purified the defiled temple and illuminated a sacred flame – which miraculously remained lighted for eight days. Those brave Maccabees fought for freedom and the survival of our holy traditions, and Klein began to identify with them.

Klein was by now a little drunk from vodka and his own importance. Having already delivered his Chanukah candles, and emptied the flask of vodka, he pulled at his lower lip and thought to himself, "Now, Ike Klein can celebrate with Mattathias and Judah. For am I not also a Maccabean?"

He sat down on a doorstep and in a loud voice began to bellow *Rock of Ages* in Hebrew:

Ma'oz Tzur Yeshu'ati, lekha na'eh leshabe'ah.
Tikon beit tefilati, vesham toda nezabe'ah.
Le'et takhin matbe'ah mitzar hamnabe'ah.
Az egmor beshir mizmor Chanukat hamizbe'ah. ■

Happy Chanukah!

Wishing you and yours a bright and beautiful festival of lights.

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Chanukah: A Time for Praise & Thanksgiving

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The flames leaped higher and higher

CURT LEVIANT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Harry Samson took the Chanukah lamp out of the cabinet and stood resolutely in the middle of the living room. "Tonight I'm going to light the candles by the front window," he announced to his wife.

He watched his wife's eyes move away from her book and up to his face. "You've always lit them in the kitchen," she said.

"Not always. You remember in New York . . ."

"These past four years have not been New York."

Harry paced the living room floor. "For once I don't want to hide it. So this is a hick town in the south. So what! The lights are supposed to be seen for many reasons. As a reminder to a passing stranger. For everyone to see how the Maccabeans overcame Syrian-Greek tyranny more than 2,000 years ago."

His wife Vera, understood. Still, she said, "But we're the only Jews here. Who will you inspire?"

Harry curled his fingers around the lamp. "No more hiding. This is a holiday of lights. A light in the darkness is no light at all."

They looked at each other in silence, absorbing the words and feeling the loneliness of four years of isolation. In the small town in Georgia, even the people's names were so Anglo-Saxon that you couldn't even have the pleasure of conjecture – maybe . . . maybe he's a Jew. Scattered in the nearby towns were a few Jewish families, but not nearly enough to shape a community.

So the Samson home became synagogue and house of study combined. But a house of meeting it could never be. On the horizon stood the day when Harry and Vera would be able to leave town, when Harry would have a teaching job in the big city. There they wouldn't be island-dwellers. There they would participate once more in communal life. Still, Harry persuaded himself that the gifts of the spirit were everywhere.

Their neighbours were silent, distant people. Like Fire Chief Brown across the street, estranged not only from the Samsons but from his other neighbours as well. A silent, brooding man looking as if some kind of guilt rode perpetually on his shoulders. Never close to anyone, he just did his job. Harry's other neighbours, too, were polite but distant friends. And so the Samsons's companionship was centred around the faculty of his school, from whom they sustained their social and intellectual nourishment.

It was the first night of Chanukah. As on each holiday, their aloneness was accentuated by the starkness of no one sharing their joy. Harry carried the candle-holder and placed it on the window sill facing the street. He put the first candle into position and lit it with the shamash candle. He sang the blessings sweetly, looking at his wife. Her eyes were focused on the flame, as if seeking out its mystery.

Harry's hand shook as he passed the flame to the candle. He waited anxiously for the next day.

Business on the street as usual. He taught his classes in basic chemistry; his wife ran their little arts and crafts shop; the world remained a tiny norm. That evening Harry Samson lit the second candle. Still the quiver of the flame reflected in his mind. Soon someone would inquire. He was impatient for someone to ask – "Why?"

The next day a question was asked.

Fire Chief Brown stopped him on the street, saying, "Excuse me, Mr. Samson, but, uh . . . can you tell me where you buy those little candles? The ones . . . you were burning in your window last night."

Harry expected him to ask, "Why?" Instead he asked "Where?" But Harry was ready with an answer.

"You can't get them here." Harry forced a laugh. "You get them 10 miles out in the supermarket. You know. A few Jewish families are scattered around there." Harry watched Brown's face. His lips didn't form the word Why. In that case, Harry would ask him, "Why did you want to know, Mr. Brown?"

"Thought I would test them for . . . fire hazard, quick burning quality, and . . . we can't be too careful, you know."

They both laughed, Harry again exploding the artificial smile into a laugh. "Yes, you can get them at the supermarket," he repeated foolishly.

When he told his wife the story, she laughed and said, "Maybe he's Jewish." Harry joined in with the joke. "Maybe I'm a fire chief." But underneath his tongue the words were forming: What will he really do with them?

Two days later he saw some men talking on the street. They were huddled together strangely. He couldn't hear what they were saying and his sensitive mood imagined the worst.

"He packs a powerful wallop," said one man, raising his fist. But then he heard, "That guy is some boxer."

He walked by the firehouse, purposely, wanting to meet Mr. Brown, wanting to bring the situation to its inevitable conclusion. He saw him standing there, an intense look on his round face, the lips puffed out, the eyes half closed. He was about to say something. Harry signalled his attention by lifting his head upwards in a half nod.

> *This is a holiday of lights. A light in the darkness is no light at all.*

He'll tell me about the fire hazard. And I'll have to remove the candles from the window. But Mr. Brown was silent. He just looked at Harry, made another motion, as if to walk toward him, but then walked slowly back into the shaded firehouse, his hands in his pockets.

The continued silence of the town hung heavily like a curtain in Harry's mind. By the fourth night he was ready to remove the candles from the window. All he needed was an official excuse. His zeal had done nothing but set him on edge. His wife noticed it. And maybe she was right. All this would have been fine in a Jewish community. But here? Here it was just stubbornness. His wife's thoughts were now, somehow and mysteriously, his own. With each lit candle his head buzzed with vague fears. Something had to come. It was slowly building up. He knew it. He breathed it in the air of the streets. He saw it in the looks of the people's eyes. He heard it in the rumblings of daily life.

As soon as he finished lighting the fourth night's candles he resolved, "This is the last night." As if confirming his decision, the phone rang. There it is, he thought. He stood watching the candles as his wife answered the phone. The little flames leaped higher and higher and disappeared into the air. Yet more flames always sprang up from the wick. Thus our people against the tyrants, he thought. He let his eyes relax, filling them with light, filling his whole being with the warmth of the light.

"It's for you, Harry." His heart bounced with the leaping flames.

"This is Fire Chief Brown," he heard the voice say. Get those candles off the window, he thought. But instead a soft voice said, "Do those candles have to burn in the window?"

Very subtle, thought Harry. "How do you mean?" Harry's voice was not his own. The cords in his throat tightened as he spoke. The sound was in a higher, odder pitch. He swallowed.

Mr. Brown continued. "Is it part of the religious ceremony to do that?"

Come out with it, Harry thought, and tell. Don't play with me. Don't keep me in suspense. Tell me now. "Let me explain the significance of the candles, Mr. Brown . . ."

Harry was cut short. "If you don't mind, just tell me, is it better if they burn in view?"

"Yes," Harry's thoughts exploded. "It is better if they are seen, if they communicate their message to the others . . ."

"Good. That's all I wanted to know. The message was communicated. Thank you." And click – the phone was dead. Harry looked at the mouthpiece for a while and set it back.

"What's the matter, Harry?" his wife asked. She stretched her hand out to him. He took her warm hand into his and felt his fingers trembling against hers.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Flickering flames in the darkness

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

The nervousness leaped with the touch into her. "What is it? What did he say?" the edge of her lips quivered. "You're all upset."

"I don't understand, Vera. He said, 'The message was communicated.' "

"Harry," Vera said softly. "Since you started this candle lighting in the window you haven't been the same. You worry about every word, every sound, every flame. Either go back to the privacy of the kitchen, or accept your own move."

Harry knew his wife was right, but still he felt that his wife was deserting him, by asking about it in the open, by verbalizing what had previously been unsaid. Gloomily he looked at the candles and at the street below, scanning the houses across the street mechanically. His mind was playing tricks again. Two of his four candles had gone out already. In the window opposite his, symbolically enough in Mr. Brown's window, the reflection of his Chanukah lights were shining. He looked at their reflection. Suddenly he called his wife.

"Come quickly. I'm having a vision."

Vera came running, afraid something was wrong with him.

"Look. Look across the street. In Mr. Brown's window."

She held her breath. They couldn't believe it. A living reflection.

Strangely, a third candle appeared to be shining in Mr. Brown's window, while only two remained in Harry's window.

"He's kindling Chanukah lights," Harry shouted. "Vera, do you know what that means? Chanukah lights by Mr. Brown?"

Across the street, the lit candle illuminated Mr. Brown's shadowy, brooding features, and the flickering flames cast a glow on his face as he lit the fourth candle.

"A light from the darkness," Vera whispered. "Another miracle." ■

Curt Leviant is he author of seven critically acclaimed novels. His most recent book is the short story collection, Zix Zexy Ztories.

SeeJN | Percussive Chanukah

DAVID BALE PHOTO

A session combining rhythm and prayer at The Leo Baeck Day School – led by Dean of Jewish Living, Rabbi Noam Katz (at left) – turned into a celebration of Chanukah, when the students discovered what can be done with eight drums plus a "shamash."

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My maternal grandfather's miracle

RUTH FRANKEL-GRANER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My precious mother (of blessed memory) often related to me the unhappy circumstances of her wedding, especially as each of her three daughters was married in a rather splendid fashion in white satin and lace, with black limousines, and bouquets cascading snowy baby's breath and purple orchids.

My mother was the oldest daughter, and the first of four daughters to wed. She was married in 1925, in the living room of her parents' home. It was a very simple ceremony. No guests or flowers, no special gown, not even a cake.

"Immediately afterwards," my mother said, "I went back to work." She told me that something horrible had happened before this event, and her father attended the marriage ceremony in his bathrobe and pyjamas. Dressing was painful. In the months just before this, he had been badly burned, and was still recovering.

How had this accident happened? The family stories conflict: his warehouse had been burnt by a bitter employee, or, in a different scenario, my grandfather, perhaps worrying about something else, distracted, or maybe just unaware, struck a match to check the contents of his automobile's gas tank. Whatever the reason, there was a huge explosion, and my grandfather was badly burnt. He lay on the pavement, scorched and blackened on most of his body and face. That is when a miracle occurred!

The wedding party of Ankel Elsikovich's second daughter Sade.

What my mother did not divulge to me, and perhaps she did not know, was something the third daughter, my Aunt Mary told me in the last years of her life. (I must add that my aunt was a down-to-earth person, logical and pragmatic, not given to mysticism or flights of fancy.)

My aunt said her father told her that after the explosion he was so close to dying that the Angel of Death, brandishing his terrible scythe, was swiftly approaching. My grandfather's father, buried for many years before that, appeared at that moment. My great-grandfather was swinging a huge, glistening axe. He placed himself directly between my grandfather and the Angel of Death. In desperate defence of his son, he swung the axe around and around, back and forth in an all-encompassing arc, fending off the Grim Reaper, until finally, unable to seize my grandfather's life, Death retreated.

My grandfather recovered, and lived a good and long life, long enough to see all of his nine children married, and to enjoy the many, many children of these marriages. ■

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Menorahs of Israel shed light on Jewish

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As winter arrives and the days grow shorter, outdoor lighting is needed more during the Chanukah season than at any other time of year. This need is taken particularly seriously in Israel, where outdoor menorahs make a nocturnal stroll through city streets a treat for the eyes – and for the spirit.

The outdoor Chanukah menorah was one Israeli tradition that painters Israel Hershberg and Yael Scalia Hershberg embraced when they made aliyah from Baltimore more than three decades ago. Each year, they place nine shot glasses filled with olive oil (and each topped with a wick) in a simple box fashioned of brass and tin. The box has glass windows and little chimneys.

"It's something of a Yerushalmi (Jerusalemite) artifact since it seems they don't make them anymore," Yael says of the box, which was purchased from a craftsman in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Mea Shearim. "It's very old world, and in its authenticity and its simplicity it has real charm."

The term menorah itself can be cause for confusion, even in Israel. The one used thousands of years ago in the Jewish Temple, which was adopted as a symbol of the nascent state of Israel, has seven branches. But the Chanukah menorah has nine branches – one for each day the scarce oil burned in the reclaimed temple more than 2,000 years ago, as well as a shamash to light the rest of the candles and stand guard over them as they burn.

In an effort to stem the confusion, in the late 1800s, Eliezer ben Yehuda, the father of the modern Hebrew language, coined the term chanukiyah. But not all chanukiyahs are outdoor affairs. Many of the 70-plus chanukiyahs in the home of Tel Aviv collector Bill Gross and his wife Lisa are just too gorgeous – and too valuable – to expose to the elements.

Gross, however, is intent on "seeing them returned to their original use," which is why he uses a different chanukiyah each year. The rotation includes the 1950 Israeli specimen he used growing up in Minneapolis. "I believe that as soon as you look at them as art objects, it rips them up by their roots. These are objects made for performing a mitzvah and it's only right to let them do that," he says.

Old chanukiyahs also serve as a reminder of those years when the act of lighting them was a risky undertaking. One chanukiyah, dating back to pre-World War II times, is on display in the Holocaust History Museum at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, where visitors can find it in the section dealing with the Nazi rise to power. Every year, members of the family who donated it – the Mansbachs – take it home to Haifa to light it for the holiday.

"The thousands of personal items in Yad Vashem's collections help us connect with the experience of Jewish men, women, and children during the Shoah," says Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev.

Member of Knesset Rabbi Dov Lipman (Yesh Atid) and his family also use a chanukiyah that reminds them of this dark time in Jewish history – a replica of one constructed of nails in a concentration camp. "It was a gift for my bar mitzvah," says Rabbi Lipman, a Maryland native who now lives in Beit Shemesh.

"As a people, we have always used any means at our disposal to survive and to stay strong, and every year when we light this chanukiyah we and our children are reminded of that."

But not all menorahs have survived tough times. Many, like the one Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky used in a Soviet internment camp 34 years ago, remain only in the memory of those touched by their light. Back in 1980, Sharansky was one of a group of political prisoners and the only Jew. "But when I told them Chanukah was coming, everyone was very enthusiastic," he says.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Yael Scalia Hershberg's Chanukah menorah, in which nine shot glasses filled with olive oil (and each topped with a wick) are placed in a simple box fashioned of brass and tin. The box was purchased from a craftsman in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Mea Shearim.
YAEL SCALIA HERSHBERG PHOTO

> *I'll say the prayers and you say 'Amen'*

People's past, present, future

> *These objects are for performing a mitzvah and it's only right to let them do that*

One friend who worked in the wood shop fashioned a crude menorah of pressed wood from a box for Sharansky. He lit it in the barracks on the first night of Chanukah and on several subsequent nights, until a KGB collaborator turned him in and the menorah was confiscated. "The head of the camp called me in and told me, 'This is not a synagogue; you were brought here for punishment, not for praying,'" recalls Sharansky, who promptly embarked on a hunger strike.

The hunger strike made the camp leaders nervous because a commission from Moscow was expected to arrive shortly. On the last night of Chanukah, Sharansky told the head of the camp, "You want me to stop the hunger strike? You give me back my menorah and bring me nine candles. I'll say the prayers and you say, 'Amen.'"

Which is exactly what happened. "I prayed the day would come when we will celebrate our freedom in Jerusalem and that all our enemies will hear our prayer and say, 'Amen,'" says Sharansky. Since the prayer was in Hebrew, the head of the camp didn't understand a word but just kept saying "Amen."

The light from all the menorahs throughout time continues to shine down through Jewish history, says Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the rabbi in charge of the Western Wall and other Israeli holy sites. Every year, after lighting the official Western Wall chanukiyah, Rabbi Rabinowitz returns home to light the small silver one his in-laws gave him for his wedding 25 years ago. "A little bit of light takes away all the darkness," the rabbi says through a translator. "And this year, more than ever, we need the light. As a people we need to be united and together, with no fighting or disagreement. We Jews need to connect through this light to the spirit of Chanukah and to each other."

Rabbi Rabinowitz adds, "At a time of so much darkness, we need to also connect to the power of our Jewish tradition. The light has the power to bring us back to it and to unify us."

The chanukiyah at the home of Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, co-founder and executive director of the Nefesh B'Nefesh aliyah agency, came with his wife Batsheva's grandfather all the way to America from Germany, where he purchased it after the war. "He had lost everything but gathered whatever he could to buy a semblance of Judaism which for him was a sign of rebuilding and hope," says Rabbi Fass. "And now that it has been passed down to the fourth generation in our family, it also reminds us that Jewish history is still being written and Israel is the homeland for tomorrow's generations of our people."

"Each night when we add a candle and the light grows steadily stronger, we realize once again the importance of being here in Israel, the only place in the world that is truly ours," Rabbi Fass adds. "Like the miracle of Chanukah, this mini miracle of our ability to return home to Israel is something that we want to publicize to the entire Jewish world." ■

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LYN AND MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If our forebears, Avram and Sarai, had contacted the offices of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services Toronto (JIAS Toronto) before they set out from Charan on their epochal journey to Canaan, they might have felt more welcomed and less strange once they landed in that unfamiliar land. Or if Moses had co-ordinated with JIAS Toronto some of the myriad details of the upcoming 40-year people-building adventure before leaving Egypt, there would undoubtedly have been less grumbling against him and his leadership. Such are the skills and the compassion of the JIAS staff.

"We didn't have any family here. We didn't even know anyone here," Beti Poyastro explained over tea at her pleasant townhome in North York. But, fortunately, there was JIAS Toronto. "JIAS guided us in every aspect of our immigration," she emphasized.

"The very first place we went to after we arrived in Toronto was the JIAS Toronto office. The very first people we met after we arrived were JIAS staff," Yury Kaganovskiy told us in a conversation at Earl Bales Park.

From left, Izak, Igal, Eran and Beti Poyastro

> *Being Jewish is a large part of who I am*

We recently met with Beti and Izak Poyastro and with Olga and Yury Kaganovskiy to find out how JIAS Toronto aided their immigration and settlement.

Beti and Izak Poyastro, from Istanbul, Turkey, are still settling into their new home in their new country. They have been here, together, for about a year now. Before that, there was much travelling back and forth to Turkey until Beti settled in Canada first, arriving in 2012 with her two young boys, while Izak stayed back in Istanbul, working, to maintain his family. Those were hard times.

Olga and Yury Kaganovskiy have been in Toronto for six years. They left their city, Moscow, which had become increasingly violent because they wanted to change their lives and seek a deeper, personal fulfilment. They arrived at Toronto Pearson International Airport with two suitcases and nothing more. Both of their adult sons stayed behind at the time; the younger has since joined them.

JIAS TORONTO

sh Immigrant Aid Services

Far from the cities of their birth, from their families, from their homes and from the friends with whom they shared language, customs, experiences and memories, the Poyastros and the Kaganovskiys now find themselves in an entirely new and different land.

We who live in the land of our birth often forget the courage, determination and commitment that is required to leave the familiar surroundings of one's native land, to move to an unfamiliar country and try to rebuild one's life entirely anew. To be sure, the Poyastros and Kaganovskiys did not come to Canada as refugees fleeing from persecution or out of fear for their lives. They came on the wings of dreams and aspirations, as newcomers, hoping to find a better way of life and the opportunity to live in freedom, safety and dignity, with the support of friends yet to be made. There was the possibility of opportunities for their families and a feeling of belonging fully to a new community. The Istanbul of Beti and Izak's childhood, more than 40 years ago, was a secular, democratic society, governed by the rule of law. This open atmosphere in which they grew had an impact on their personalities. Beti and Izak have a refined, European air about them. They each speak a number of languages, are confident and self-possessed. They were raised in culturally rich Jewish homes that borrowed from their Sephardi roots and mingled with the many cultural, linguistic, culinary and other influences of the Ottoman world. Ladino was one of the languages spoken by Beti's grandparents, both of whom were born in Turkey. Izak's paternal grandfather came from Egypt where Jewish life was also expressed openly with pride alongside the religions of ones' neighbours.

As a result, Beti and Izak have always been "sensitive to their Jewish identity" and engaged with their Judaism. "Being Jewish is a large part of who I am," Beti told us, emphasizing the point with references to her membership in L'union des étudiants Juifs de France and to her work for the Judaica radio program in Strasbourg, while she was studying law in France. For his part, Izak pointed out that he had learned his Hebrew language reading skills and developed lifelong friendships at Machzikei Hatorah, in Istanbul. Their social milieu was a Jewish one, though not exclusively so.

Olga and Yury, by contrast, were born more than 50 years ago in a tightly controlled totalitarian society. They are both earnest and serious individuals who measure their words carefully before speaking them. The early period of their lives offered limited opportunities and fewer choices regarding the professional and personal paths they could pursue. Though educated and sophisticated, they knew very little about the Jewish customs and traditions of their ancestors. Yury's paternal grandfather was the last family member who had tried to instil in him any sense, let alone any knowledge, of his Jewishness. The Soviet system attempted to ensure that Yury's grandfather would be his last religious instructor.

But the seeds of Jewish self-awareness planted in Yury by his grandfather could not be entirely uprooted. Since coming to Canada, Yury has explored and has begun to nurture his latent Judaism. He attends synagogue regularly. "Now I put on tfillin each day," Yury told us with a broad smile.

Yury and Olga first contacted JIAS Toronto from Moscow. "We arrived at Toronto Pearson Airport by ourselves. We stopped and looked at each other. We knew no one in the entire North American continent, we had only each other. We had no bank. No doctor. We had no references. No credit rating. We were entirely alone. But JIAS Toronto helped us. Each day, for the next two weeks, we were at their offices. They co-ordinated every step," Yury and Olga told us in their careful, deliberate manner.

For the Poyastros, the openness of life in Istanbul had slowly eroded since a regime change in 2003. The changed atmosphere also resulted in negative sentiment against Israel. "Jewish identity [in public] is hidden. You don't feel comfortable wearing a kippah outside. Everything Jewish is kept under the radar," the Poyastros told us. "And that is why," they continued, "you move to a country where you can express yourselves as Jewish people."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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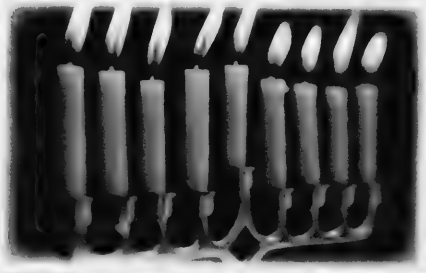

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Community provides aid to fellow Jews

Olga and Yury Kaganovskiy

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

And so the Poyastros quickly explored the Jewish aspects of life in Toronto and how they might take part in it. "JIAS staff explained the Jewish education system to us," Beti and Izak told us, "and they connected us with schools." The young couple has found a synagogue where they are comfortable and are determined to be "involved in the Jewish life" of their newly chosen community.

We all know however, that the key to successfully overcoming the personal and familial upheavals that erupt from immigration to a new land is finding employment and providing a reasonable livelihood for one's family.

Although Beti had a successful legal practice in Istanbul, she does not practise law here. Undaunted, on the advice and at the initiative of JIAS Toronto staff, Beti took part in career-oriented programs and networking workshops, was interviewed, persisted, was interviewed again, persevered and has now found employment.

Izak studied economics at Istanbul University, and has worked successfully as a career businessman. He deferred his permanent arrival to Toronto until he was able to secure meaningful, full-time employment here. Both are happy in their professional situations.

Yury studied at the Moscow Linguistic University and worked as an English teacher in Moscow. Olga's training was with computers and she worked as an electronic archives manager.

Finding work in Toronto for the Kaganovskiys has been a more difficult process but ultimately they were also successful due to the commitment to them by the JIAS staff. "JIAS helped us look for work. They helped with our resumés, with interviews, sending us on courses and attending learning programs," Yury said. A JIAS Toronto scholarship, funded by community donors, enabled him to take the necessary certification program to teach here.

With his superb language skills, Yury found a job as an instructor in one of the two JIAS Toronto Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) schools funded by the federal government. As "pay back" to the organization that helped them, Yury volunteered for several years with JIAS Toronto's Conversation Café program. Olga volunteers at a community centre for seniors. She also works part time at a synagogue.

One of the many imperatives taught to us by Jewish history is that we must look after each other. We must care for each other. We must not be indifferent to each other. That is surely at least part of the meaning of one of the best known maxims propagated by our ancient sages, *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh le'zeh* – All of Israel is responsible one for the other.

As the testimonies of Beti and Izak, Olga and Yury make clear, JIAS Toronto is a living embodiment of that maxim. Since the 1920s, the Canadian Jewish community has organized itself, generation after generation, to provide aid to fellow Jews as they travelled or fled, seeking a better home for themselves and their children.

At the annual meeting of the JIAS Toronto board in January 1942, one of its members gave modern meaning to that ancient rabbinic catchphrase:

"There is not a single Jew in the world who does not know the importance and the need of Jewish emigration and immigration agencies. ... and no words can fully describe or appraise their importance."

Perhaps Beti and Izak Poyastro and Olga and Yury Kaganovskiy can more ably provide us with some words to describe JIAS Toronto's significance.

"JIAS is very important. We are people who have really benefited from JIAS – socially and professionally. They do an amazing job. They help to make us comfortable in our new country. JIAS Toronto is part of our lives, actually," Beti and Izak told us.

"JIAS Toronto has been our second home," Yury announced with the formality that characterizes his speech. And then Olga added, brushing away the tears that had formed in her eyes: "We are on the way, thank you to Yury and to JIAS Toronto." ■

Meet Jerusalem's Bagel Man – from Montreal

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Montrealers are passionate about their bagels no matter where they go, as Shmarya and Lainie Richler have discovered in their struggle to bring Montreal's finest to their little café on Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda Street.

Unlikely? Perhaps. Shmarya worked for more than 30 years in high-tech, while Lainie is a fitness instructor and manager of a fitness centre. But their kids always joked that someday they'd retire and run a café. Now, with Muffin Boutique (16 Ben Yehuda St., 02-500-0041, www.facebook.com/richlerbakery), they're making that dream come true.

"We thought, 'What's the worst that can happen? We'll lose a certain amount of money,'" Lainie says.

Compared with leaving the rat race, it was a no-brainer, Shmarya says. "Now, when Sunday rolls around, I'm actually looking forward to going in to work."

Opening in July 2014 during Operation Protective Edge, the Richlers, who made aliyah from Montreal in 1995, were undaunted, despite Red Alert sirens in Jerusalem. They collected donations and sent bagels to soldiers on the front lines.

Now, Muffin Boutique must battle the growing number of five-shekel fixed-price coffee shops throughout the pedestrian shopping area. Consumer expectations have been tarnished, seeing coffee, sandwiches and desserts, all for a set five shekels (about $1.46 Cdn).

"People who appreciate quality come to us," Shmarya says. "It's growing all the time – we have a steady stream of loyal customers."

One customer tasted the fixed-price coffee next door and came straight to Muffin Boutique. "He said, 'It's not coffee.'"

When they decided to open a bakery, the Richlers – he's a first cousin of the late writer Mordecai Richler, named after their mutual grandfather – made themselves popular in their Efrat neighbourhood by calling on friends and family to taste their experimental offerings.

With Lainie's fitness background and interest in vegan food, she created lots of healthy choices, but doesn't disdain carbs. While Muffin Boutique does offer soups, salads and other delicious alternatives, she says ultimately, "Jews like a good bagel."

But where most bagel shops offer a range of other toppings alongside a single whole wheat offering, "we make whole wheat in every variety. Why not?" Lainie says.

At Muffin Boutique, healthy tastes great:

Shmarya and Lainie Richler

Lainie's vegan muffins earned her a write-up in the *Jerusalem Vegan Times*.

But if muffins are Lainie's department, Shmarya is all about the bagels. He discovered a few good reasons nobody was baking Montreal bagels in Israel before he came along.

For one thing, the flour is different – lower in protein (or "softer") than Canadian flour. But while some insist that the secret is in Montreal's city water supply, Shmarya chose two factors to make his bagels as authentic as possible: malt and a pre-baking boil in honey water.

Malt wasn't easy to come by. One brand had a kosher symbol that wasn't recognized by the Mehadrin Yerushalayim organization, and he wanted Muffin Boutique to appeal to the broadest range of visitors. He initially used an Israeli beer for its malty flavour, but finally found certified malt.

The malt, Shmarya says, also gives darker products their distinctive colour. "Some places use caramel colour," he says, while Muffin Boutique avoids all hydrogenated fats, food colourings and preservatives.

With malt and flour, Shmarya was almost ready to bake. But, drawing on his project management background, he laid the groundwork carefully. First, he took a business course and consulted with Israeli small-business organization MATI. Then, back in North America, he toured Gotta Getta Bagel in New York, waking up at four in the morning to see how it was done.

Finally, he flew in Karl Wolfsgajer of Mount Royal Bagels in North Vancouver for a week to help refine his recipe. Even without a real wood-burning stove, Shmarya seems satisfied – and so do his customers.

Just the day before he spoke to *The CJN*, Shmarya says, two former Montrealers stopped by for bagels. One of them told him, "I closed my eyes, I took a bite, and I was back in Montreal." ■

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The rabbi who wouldn't backcheck

CHANI GREENWALD ILLUSTRATION

A story by Jay Teitel

The worst rabbi I ever met – Rabbi Jeffery Kalbfleisch – was the rabbi who was originally scheduled to officiate at the bat mitzvah of my oldest daughter, Samantha, but who didn't quite make it to the event. By then he was gone from the local rabbinical scene, and not willingly, although he made a point of telling anyone who asked that the divorce was actually his idea. In this, to be fair, he wasn't completely wrong.

The synagogue at which Rabbi Kalbfleisch officiated during his short stint was the one my family considered ours at the time, or as close to "ours" as Jews of our stripe could get: a low-slung modernist structure on upper Leslie Street in Toronto, a couple of blocks from the city's northernmost boundary. It was called Shaarei Olam – in English the "Gates of the Universe" – but it looked less like the gates of anything than an elongated World War II pillbox. That was outside. Inside it was modest and homey, especially by Toronto synagogue standards, which in the late 20th century approached the papal.

This was one of the main reasons my wife and I had chosen it. Another was that it was a Conservative synagogue, which meant men and women could sit together, and 12-year-old girls could have bat mitzvahs and read from the Torah. Overall we were a folksy, laid-back congregation, where men occasionally showed up without ties, where children did a lot of improvisational running around, where a woman might wear a prayer shawl one Saturday to say Mourner's Kaddish (as one already had) and no one would say anything (which they hadn't). As a place of worship it was more evolutionary than revolutionary. Rabbi Kalbfleisch was neither. That was the beginning of his troubles. There was also, of course, the fact that he wouldn't backcheck.

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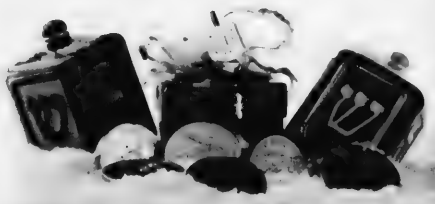

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I got my first real taste of the rabbi's character about a month after he arrived to take over the post, when I met with him in his office to go over logistics for Samantha's bat mitzvah. The rabbinical offices at Shaarei Olam were on the parking lot side, and presided over by an ageless, razor-sharp multitasker named Doreen, who dressed a bit like Auntie Mame and who could tell you where every single thing you might desire was located in the building.

"He's waiting for you," she said when I walked in. "You have a yarmulke with you?"

"Seriously?" I said. "It's just his office, not the sanctuary."

"Your funeral," she said with a little shrug.

The rabbi's office door was open when I got to it; he was sitting behind his desk, suit jacket on but unbuttoned, tie perfectly tied, his fingers laced on the desk in front of him as he read something. He unlaced them when he saw me and slid them wider on either side of him in a move that could have been a benediction or a signal that it was time to eat, either one. He was a big guy, barrel-chested, with a good head of wavy, sandy hair. There was something of the self-help pitchman in his appearance, although he didn't seem quite focused enough for the role; his hands were big and meaty, but his gaze was distracted.

"Mark Posen," he said. "Glad you could make it. I've been looking forward to a private chat with you. I've heard a lot about you."

"I'm flattered, I think," I said.

"Uh-huh. You seem to have forgotten your kippah, Mark. There's one in the cookie tin on the filing cabinet behind you."

I gave him a look, still not believing it. His look didn't waver. "I prefer it," he said. Out of the Marks and Spencer cookie tin in question, I took my usual, a standard black satin loaner.

"Better," he said. "Sit, please."

I told him that I was pressed for time; I'd just come by to drop off my list of aliyah requests for my daughter's bat mitzvah – the people we wanted to have come up to assist with the reading of the Torah.

"Speaking of which," he said, "I'll need you to take this home with you and fill it out first. Just a brief questionnaire about your honorees. Basic qualifications." He folded the form he'd been reading and held it out to me. "Everyone will be getting one from now on."

"No disrespect, Rabbi," I said, "but the modus operandi here has always been for the parents of bat mitzvah kids to provide four or five names for aliyahs, and then the rabbi – you in this case – just lets them know if there's room."

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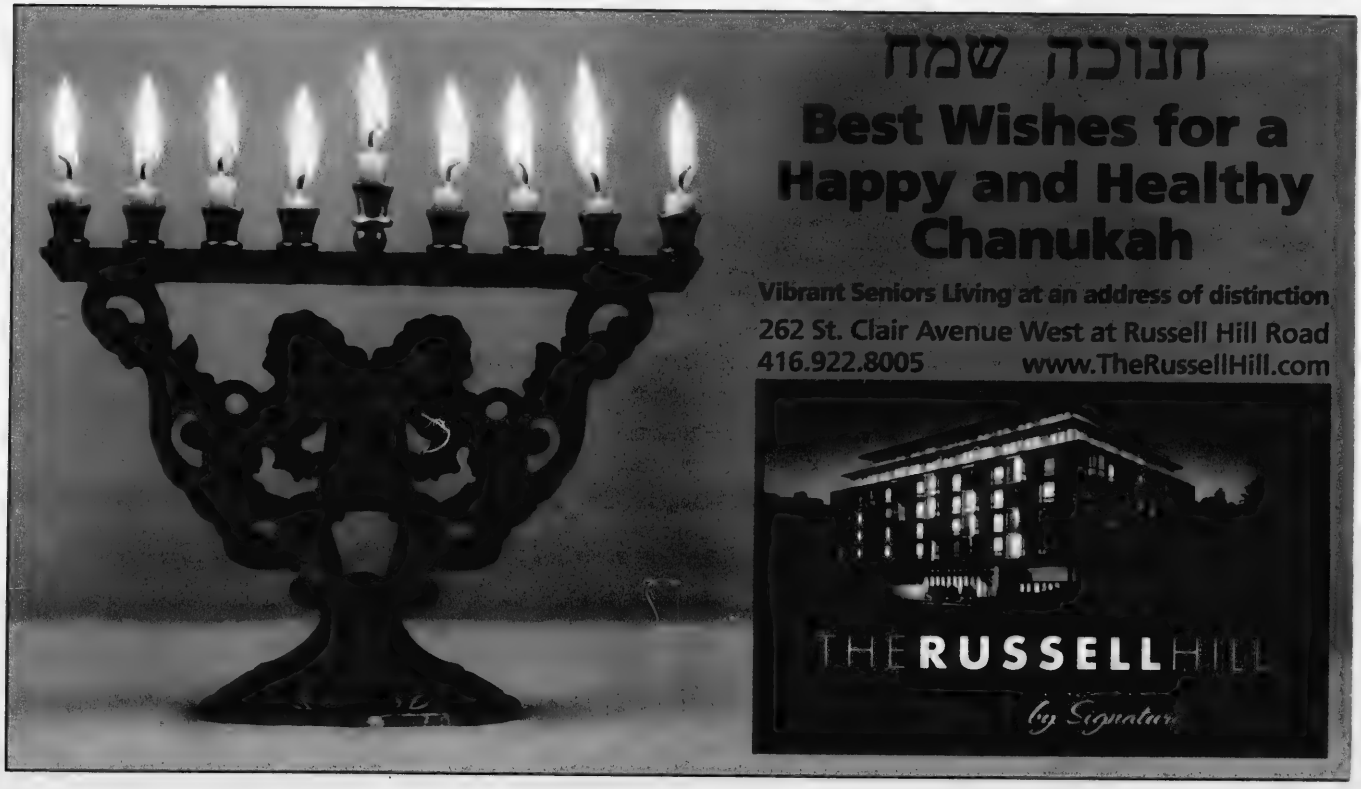
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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

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"I'm aware of the modus operandi here," he said. "You have no idea how aware I am of the modus operandi here. My modus operandi includes a little a priori homework. I find it can help avoid awkward situations later on." He was still holding the form out.

I took it. "If we're done here, Rabbi -- "

"Unfortunately, we're not. Please sit down, you're making me nervous."

"I've got five minutes tops," I said.

"Who doesn't?" he said. The irony of it surprised me; it was tinged with a faint weariness. I sat. "Mark," he said, "have you ever heard of the phrase tikkun olam?"

"Simon Luria," I said. "Kabbalistic visionary in the 18th century, in Spain, I think. Developed the idea of healing the world by restoring order to it. Tikkun olam."

"So the stories about you were true," he said.

"No," I said, "I just do a lot of crosswords. And I don't think Kabbalah is part of the modus operandi around here either, Rabbi."

"HaShem forbid," he said. "But I'm not talking about Kabbalah, Mark, I'm talking about the original meaning of tikkun olam, which refers to repairing the world by simply following the rules of Jewish practice and decorum." I had the momentary feeling I was being interviewed by a TV talk-show host. "Mark, it's come to my attention that a small group of congregants at Shaarei Olam, present company included, have been reforming the Saturday Shabbat service in a fashion that is not exactly geared toward tikkun olam."

He was talking, of course, about the Kiddush Klub. More generally, about the fact that although I'd been a regular attendee at services for the past six months, along with half a dozen friends I'd had since junior high school, none of us was remotely close to what anyone would consider an observant Jew. We'd just been trapped by logistics. Synagogue regulations dictated that if your child was having a bar or bat mitzvah, they had to attend Saturday services regularly in the year preceding the event, along with a parent. Four or five of the guys in our group had kids of roughly the same age, now all turning 12 and 13, so our mandated sentences of shul attendance overlapped. Initially this seemed like a plus; by sitting together we could discuss sports *sotto voce* and get through the service painlessly. The problem was the Torah reading, which usually started at about 10:45, and was conducted by an 80-year-old gentleman who had such a quiet quaver of a voice that even a civilized whisper was audible over it.

Worse, after the Torah reading came the rabbi's sermon, which with the rabbi of the day meant 15 minutes of either terrible jokes or political jingoism. In self-defence, a group of us eventually approached the rabbi with a proposition: we could maximize our own preparation for our kids' transition to adulthood, we suggested, by retiring, during the Torah reading, to the Hebrew school lunchroom in the basement, where we'd hold a study seminar to explore the Torah portion of the week. Our kids, meanwhile, would stay in the sanctuary. The rabbi was dubious, but agreed; he had his hostages, and we had the Kiddush Klub. For tradition's sake, we added a bottle of Canadian Club, some herring tidbits, and the odd pastry. The rabbi made us promise to assign one person a week to prepare an exegesis on the week's portion, which we did, and which we discussed afterwards, in give and takes that turned out to be surprisingly lively. When the rabbinic changeover took place, we figured that the old rabbi would simply tell the new one what the score was, and the

> *Mark, have you ever heard of the phrase tikkun olam?*

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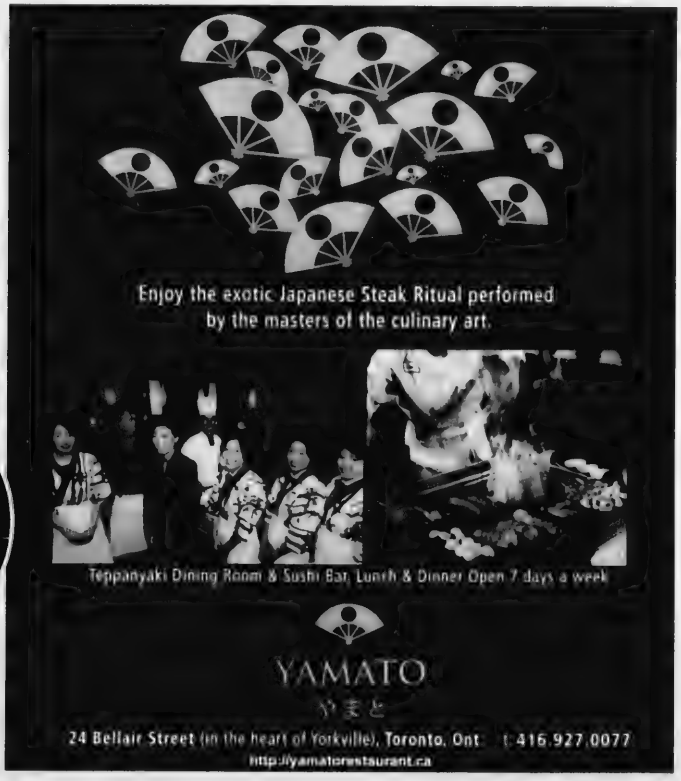
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status quo would prevail.

Clearly, we'd assumed too much.

"The Kiddush Klub," I said.

"The Kiddush Klub," he said. "Interesting choice of name, by the way. No doubt a source of hilarity to you and your cronies."

"Hilarity might be a stretch," I said. "None of us regard the Kiddush Klub as a joke, Rabbi."

"Really. Two K's in the name, I presume? Like the Keystone Kops?"

"Or like Kit Kat, the chocolate bar. And that still doesn't make it a joke. We've all learned more about the Torah in the last year than we ever have."

"So I should be thankful for the Kiddush Klub."

"That's up to you," I said. "We are."

"Possibly I should recommend it to the liturgical department of the rabbinate. You could franchise it."

"Rabbi, I get the feeling this is heading somewhere specific. Could we get just get there?"

"I'm shutting it down."

"Pardon?"

"I'm terminating the Kiddush Klub. It's an idea which sends absolutely the wrong message to the congregation at large, particularly our younger members. In the interests of fairness, though, I'm giving your group till the new year to disband. That should be more than ample. As of Jan.1, the Hebrew school lunchroom will be locked on Shabbat. I was hoping you could convey the notice of closure to the rest of the group."

"The notice of closure? I didn't know we were in a courtroom here."

"We're in God's house, Mark. It's never anything but."

"I have no idea what that means," I said. "You realize that I'll have to discuss this with the other Klub members."

"Naturally. Just make sure it's a quick discussion. In questions of practice I won't be entertaining negotiations."

"Rabbi," I stood up at this point. I was afraid if I didn't, I'd crawl across the desk and strangle him. "I really do have to get going."

I made it as far as the door. "Mark," he called, "one more thing. I understand that you and some other members of the congregation play a little pick-up hockey during the week."

"Adult shinny, not pick-up."

"There's a difference?"

"Pick-up games are usually closed. Shinny is open to the general public." Something occurred to me. "Is hockey unhalachic, too?"

"Of course not. But I played a bit myself in high school in Ohio. I was wondering if there'd be any objection to me coming out to the game one night."

"It's shinny, Rabbi, like I said. It's open to everyone."

"So you'll run the idea past the group? I wouldn't want to make waves."

•••

"He doesn't want to make waves?" said Avi Sklar. We were sitting in the change room at the Lester B. Pearson Memorial Arena, putting on our equipment. It was two days after my meeting with the rabbi, and I'd just briefed the group. "First he tells you he's trashing the Kiddush Klub, then he wants to know if he can come play hockey with us?" Avi had been my best friend since Grade 6. He co-owned an interlocking driveway-paving company, and could bench press 250 pounds a dozen times in a row.

"He wants our blessing," I said. "He believes in tikkun olam; he doesn't want to rock the boat."

"Bullshit," said Avi. "He just wants to let everyone know that he's a rabbi beforehand, so when he shows up no one'll hit him."

"We don't hit anyone anyway," said Ronny Spillman.

"He doesn't know that," said Avi. "He's American. You think they have a clue about the laws of shinny?"

"This is like a priest who wants to play?" said Pietro Bevilacqua. Pietro was one of our regular goalies, as well as a regular in at least six other games at the rink during the week. He was known as the Human Bocce Ball. With his skates on he was maybe 5 1/2 feet tall.

"Kind of, Pietro," I said. "Except rabbis aren't celibate and they don't take confession."

"I used to play with a priest," he said. "He was the dirtiest guy on the ice."

"Kalbfleisch is completely full of s--t," said Avi. "Believe me."

"Maybe," I said, "but maybe he has a point about the Klub, too. Our study sessions have been going downhill on their own lately anyway. Guys are taking huge bathroom breaks, and the quality of the presentations is getting to be embarrassing. We're always bickering."

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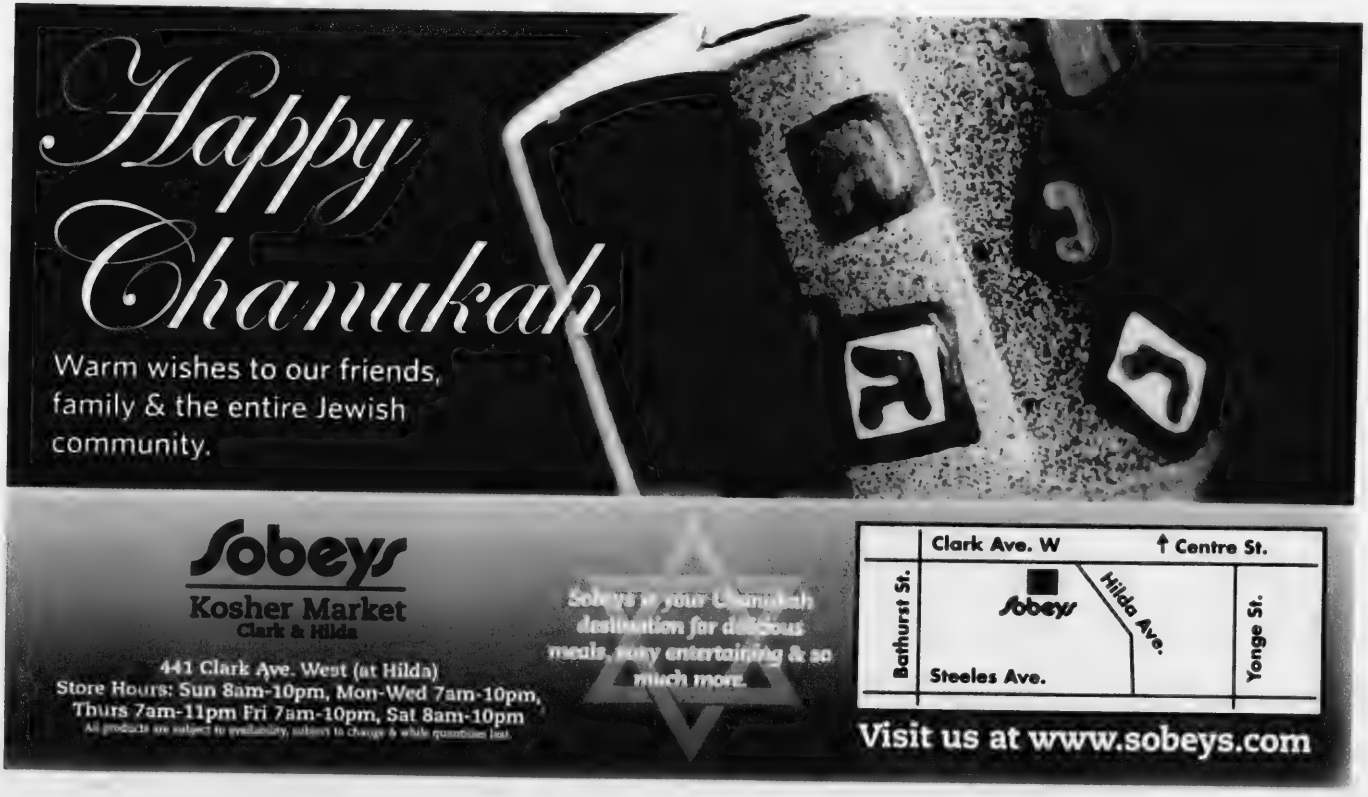
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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

"Hey, that's what Jews do," said Ronny.

"Italians, too," said Pietro. "It's very similar."

"Forget the Klub for a second," I said. "What am I telling the Rabbi about hockey? Are we giving him our blessing?"

"If he's got five bucks he doesn't need it," Ronny said.

"He knows that. But he wants to know if he's welcome. It's not exactly a crazy question."

"Can he go top shelf?" said Pietro.

"Top shelf, please," Avi said. "The question is, can he stand up on skates."

"We should say yes," said Stan Melvin. "We should let him play."

We looked at him as one. Stan was probably the shyest of all our group, a high school history teacher who usually didn't volunteer information unless he was discussing the glories of golden Mycenae or professional wrestling. "I'm worried about the questionnaire Mark was talking about. I got mine yesterday."

"You mean the aliyah questionnaire, for the honorees?" I said. Stan's son Jordan's bar mitzvah was two weeks after Samantha's bat. "It looked like boilerplate to me. The usual questions. What's the problem?"

"Brenda's brother Steven is adopted," Stan said. Brenda was his wife. "And he never had a conversion. I had him marked down for the third aliyah. He has to have it. If he doesn't, I'll end up divorced."

"So why can't he?" said Ronny.

"Because you have to be Jewish to be called to the Torah," I said, realizing it.

Stan nodded. "Steven was born gentile, and apparently a gentile baby adopted by Jewish parents has to have a certified conversion to be considered Jewish, which he didn't."

"And so technically he can't be called to the Torah," I said.

"That makes zero f-----g sense," said Avi. "He grew up in a Jewish home, right? Brenda's Jewish, so he's Jewish. Done. And who gives a s--t if he's not? He could be 99.99 per cent goy for all I care. No offense, Pietro."

"None taken," said Pietro. "I'm a 100 per cent goy."

"It's true," said Matt Joseph. "This is us. Who cares about things like that?"

"Kalbfleisch," I said.

Stan looked at me again. "The rabbi told me Steven had to have a conversion to come to the Torah, and it couldn't be a Reform conversion, either, it had to be Orthodox or Conservative. Jordan's bar is in a month; there's no time for any kind of conversion. And besides, how can I ask Brenda's brother to get a conversion? He reads Hebrew 10 times better than I do. She'd kill me."

"Did you tell the rabbi any of this?" I asked.

"All of it," said Stan. "He said there were no exceptions to the rule. He said that it was for the good of everyone."

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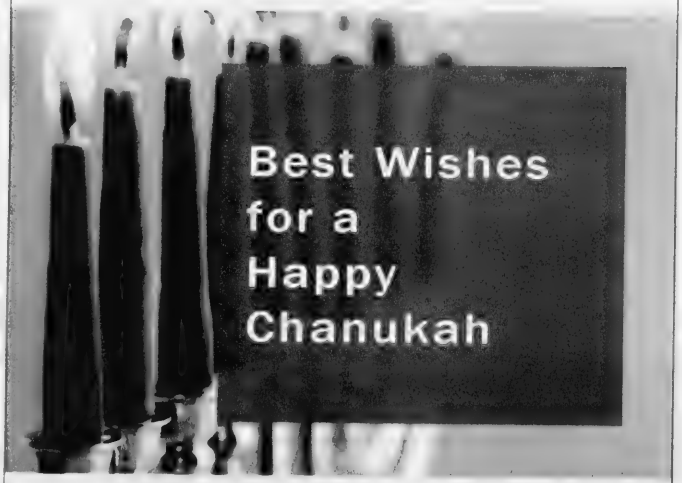

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"And you still think the guy's not an a--hole?" Avi said to me.

"Stan," I said, "Wait. If the rabbi said all this, why do you want us to let him play?"

"Because it's the only chance I have to get on his good side," Stan said. "We do something nice for him, maybe he'll do the same for us. For me, anyway. Mark, you get it, right? It's for my marriage."

"And now," said Avi, "we are truly f----d."

•••

The rabbi came out to the game the next Wednesday night. By design Avi and I got to the rink early, so we could greet any players who weren't part of our circle and brief them about his joining in, and to remind them to take it easy on him, because he probably wouldn't be able to keep up. There were a lot of shrugs and whatevers. The most interested comment I got was from a young guy named Walter who drove up to the game every week from downtown: "Can I shoot at his jewels?"

"Maybe it won't be so bad," I said to Avi, sitting down to get dressed. "Maybe he'll be better than we think he'll be."

"I know exactly how good he'll be," said Avi. "He'll know all the rules, and he probably won't skate on his ankles. Oh, and his equipment will be new. But he'll stink. But what really stinks is the fact that he's coming at all. It's totally bad form for a rabbi to show up at a hockey game."

"It is?"

"Pose, you know I'm right." Pose was Avi's nickname for me, either that or occasionally "the Pose". I'd never been sure whether it was a contraction of Posen or poser. "And Kalbfleisch knows it too, I guarantee. He knows exactly how much he's f---ing up the game by playing with us."

"I really doubt that," I said. But I didn't get a chance to explain why, because at that moment the rabbi walked into the change room.

He was wearing a suit, although without his usual tie, and pulling a rolling hockey bag. At this particular point in history, on the brink of the new millennium, hockey bags with wheels were a novelty, and most seasoned recreational player regarded them with suspicion. If you weren't strong enough to carry your equipment, the feeling ran, how could you play the world's fastest game?

"Mark," he nodded at us. "Avram."

"Rabbi," said Avi, a bit too evenly.

"Guys," I announced. "this is Rabbi Jeffery Kalbfleisch."

"Just Jeffery, please."

"My bad. Guys, this is Jeffery Kalbfleisch. Rabbi Kalbfleisch, the guys."

There was a respectable chorus of heys and hellos from the room. Pietro the goalie actually paused in putting on his chest protector to bow tentatively, a move close to genuflection. The rabbi nodded back, and came over to where we were dressing.

"Is there anywhere in particular I should sit?" he said. "A designated area for rookies?"

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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

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"Just take any open spot," I said. "We don't stand on ceremony here. Oh, and Rabbi, do you have a black jersey?"

"Navy," he said. "And a white."

"Navy's fine. You're going dark today."

The shadow of a smile creased his face. "Why am I not surprised?"

"No symbolism is involved in team-selection here, Rabbi," I said, "I can assure you. We're Kabbalah-free."

"I'm relieved to hear it," he said, and took a spot along the wall adjoining ours, between Walter the downtown commuter and Ronny Spillman.

I leaned over to tie my skates, which Avi was already doing. "Avram?" I said under my breath. "Would that be you?"

"F--- off," said Avi.

While we finished dressing I watched the rabbi out of the corner of my eye. He was fastidious in removing his suit, which he hung not on the hook behind him but on a wooden hanger he took out of his equipment bag; he then placed the hanger on the hook. At least he seemed to know the right order to put on his equipment. The navy jersey he'd mentioned was a bit tight, and Ronny had to help him pull the back down over his shoulder pads. Most of his pads, I noticed, were similarly snug; it was as though they harked from an earlier era and he hadn't had them on for a while. The overall effect, along with his heft, was to make him look like a slightly overstuffed, slightly sheepish, boy. It also made me feel twice as responsible for him as I wanted to.

At 10 minutes to the hour I let him know that this was when we headed out to the ice. The Zamboni driver was just finishing up his flood, and as he steered the machine through the big gate at the end of the rink the rabbi made a move to step on the ice. I put my hand on his arm.

"We have to wait till he's completely off and closes the gate," I said. "It's an insurance issue."

"Thanks," he said. "I'll remember." The Zamboni gate closed, and the rabbi stepped out, and skated toward the far end to take a lap. His style was pretty much as Avi had predicted, slow and more than a bit stiff. We all took our warm-up laps and practice shots on Pietro and the other goalie. Sticks were tapped. Avi shot the game puck into the other end to get things going, and Stan, who had arrived late but dressed quickly, hustled back to pick up the puck and passed it immediately to the rabbi, who was skating carefully up the boards beside him. "Go ahead, Rabbi, take it up!" Stan said, grinning like a crazed cheerleader. Kalbfleisch nodded slightly, a humble man of God. Then he took one longer stride, and put his head down.

Ten seconds later, Pietro was fishing the puck out of the net behind him. Five minutes after that, the rabbi's dark team was ahead 3-0, and the universe had shifted.

He was, against all odds, a terrific hockey player. He was great. He had the kind of totally natural talent that's exhilarating and deflating to watch at once: it uplifts you with the realization of what's possible in the universe, and drags you down with the certainty that it will never be possible for you. His stiff skating in the warm-up was just a variation, it turned out, on a thoroughbred's stilted gait before a horse race, a little rabbinical dressage. In fact, he had the trick of speed, which in hockey is palpably a trick. Two steps, and he was at top velocity, past everyone. He also had great hands, and an effortless, slingy wrist shot. He could genuinely go top shelf. Avi was built like a concrete block and was by far the best athlete among us, and he wasn't in the same league as the rabbi. If the pros were the ne plus ultra, the rabbi was a lot closer to them than we were to him.

The game ended with a football score, 14 to 6 for the dark team. In the dressing

room the guys on both teams seemed either too star-struck to speak to him, or couldn't compliment him enough. Stan was one of the latter. The rabbi accepted the accolades modestly, and got out of his equipment with a speed that suddenly looked practised, keeping eye contact to a minimum. He didn't pause till he got to the door with his wheeled bag. "Thanks for the game, gentlemen," he said.

"Rabbi, no problem," said Stan. "And come again, please."

"If you insist."

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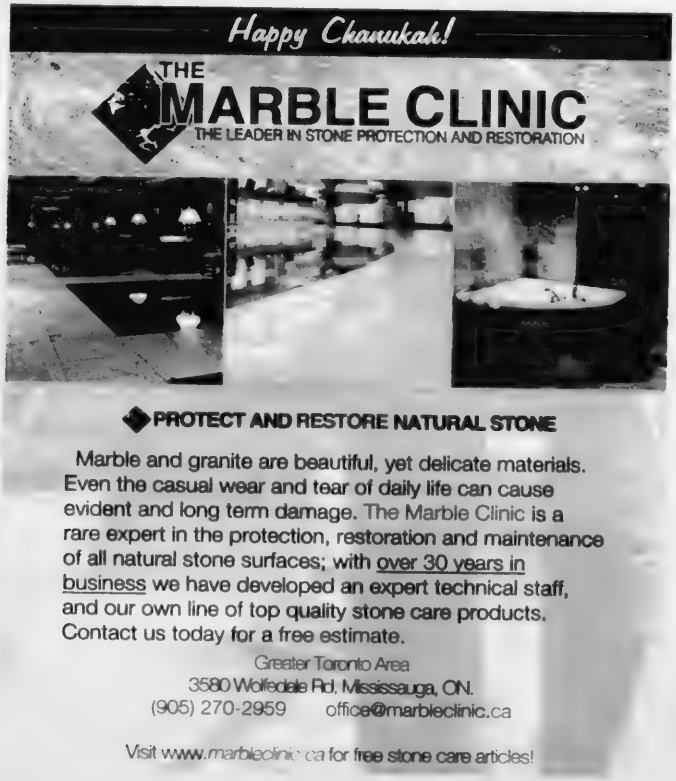
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"We do."

"Yeah, and bring more rabbis!" yelled Walter from the corner.

"That I can't guarantee," Kalbfleisch said. The laugh it got him as he went out the door was a lot louder than it should have been.

"So what do you think?" I asked Avi when it died down.

"The f----r didn't backcheck once," he said.

•••

A little primer here, for anyone who needs it: backchecking is to hockey what cleaning up is to dinner – a thankless but necessary task that operates on the fringes of the action. It happens when you lose the puck to the other team in their zone, and the play flows back toward your own net, and you have to turn and chase after it. Besides being painful and soul-crushing, backchecking is also something that recreational players aren't ordinarily expected to engage in – unless you happen to be a ringer, a truly good player who somehow stumbles into an average game. The rules for ringers are immutable: you do your best not to show up anyone on the other team; you pass the puck at least once to everyone on your team, including the lousiest guy; and you never try your hardest, except when you're backchecking, which for you is mandatory. The one thing you're expected to do with all your resources when you're a ringer is backcheck, because it's the one unglamorous thing that makes you momentarily everyone's equal. For a ringer to fail to backcheck in a shinny game is as much a mortal sin as a strategic one.

So when Avi called me at 12:00 that night, I thought I knew why.

"Avi, it's midnight."

"I know, Pose, but this is serious."

I rolled over to the edge of the bed with the phone, so I wouldn't wake up my wife. "The rabbi not backchecking might be a lot of things, but serious isn't one of them."

Who said anything about backchecking? I'm talking about Stan. I just left his house. I was there with Ronny and Matt; we had to walk him around his block three times to get him to calm down. He is totally wack, Pose, about this aliyah affair. I'm really worried about him."

"Why is he still upset? I thought he established some nice rapport with the rabbi at the rink."

"He established that he was a total ass-kisser. You saw him."

"But that was the whole point, right? To get to know Kalbfleisch so he could talk to him about his brother-in-law, and get him to change his mind about the aliyah."

"Right. But now he says he can't do it."

"Why not?"

"Because the rabbi's too good."

"At hockey? How does that change anything?"

"Who can tell with Stan? He said something about his original idea being that the rabbi would be a lousy player, and Stan would offer to help him with his game. The rabbi would owe him something, so he could ask for something in return. But because the rabbi turned out to be so good, there's nothing Stan can do for him, and no way he can ask him for anything. He says Kalbfleisch is even more perfect now than he was before. He's says he's afraid of him."

"So? So am I."

"No, you're not. Or if you are it's for some weird, Pose-ish reason, like you enjoy being afraid of him. Stan isn't enjoying this. He thinks it could be the end of his family as he knows it."

"Why doesn't he just talk to Brenda already? She'll understand."

"No, she won't. You know Brenda. She'll just tell him he's a coward, and then go smoke a cigarette. Then in the morning he'll find his clothes on the sidewalk. She's done it before. Meanwhile, why is Stan letting that schmuck do this to him, can you tell me that? Why doesn't he just fill him in?"

"Because he really is afraid of him," I said. Avi didn't answer. I recognized his silence. "Okay," I said. "I'll do it."

"You're the man, Pose," said Avi. "My regards to the missus."

The next afternoon I left work early so I could get to the shul before five. Doreen wasn't at her usual post at the reception desk, but the rabbi's door was open again when I got to it. The rabbi himself was sitting at his desk as he had been before, but this time with his head in his hands.

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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

More precisely, his elbows were propped on the desk and the heels of his palms were jammed into his eyes.

"Who is it?" he said, without moving.

"It's Mark Posen," I said. "Are you all right?"

"Eye drops," he said. "I tried using new soft contacts at last night's game for the first time. The experiment was not successful."

"You could have fooled me," I said. "Plus about 18 other guys. How many goals would you have scored if you could actually see?

He dropped his hands and opened his eyes. His gaze on me was teary and bloodshot. "I expected you might drop by again sooner or later, Mark. I didn't think we really finished our discussion the other day. Second thoughts about the Kiddush Klub?"

"No, I'm here about something else. At least someone else. Stan Melvin."

"Stan Melvin," he said. "Stanley Melvin. From the hockey game."

"Not hockey," I said. "Aliyahs. I'm here on Stan's behalf, Rabbi, to ask you to reconsider your decision about the aliyah list for his son's bar mitzvah, and let his brother-in-law Steven come to the Torah. You'd be doing Stan a huge favour if you did."

He regarded me for a moment longer through his watering eyes, then pulled a Kleenex from the box in front of him, and got up and went over to the office window. Outside, the late November afternoon was turning quickly to dusk, the days shortening toward Christmas. Everything on Leslie Street, the leafless trees, the paper boxes, even the traffic, was rendered in black and white. "There's a simple solution. If Stanley's brother-in-law has a suitable conversion, he'll be welcomed to the bimah with open arms."

"Even if there was time for a conversion," I said, "which there isn't, Stan couldn't suggest it without offending his brother-in-law and wife enough that it would probably ruin the bar mitzvah and a lot more."

"My hands are tied, Mark. Certain laws are like Isaac Luria's vessels of light. Break one, and you shatter the whole."

"Except you aren't a lightkeeper," I said. "You're a rabbi at a suburban synagogue where the people can be, okay, exasperating sometimes, I admit it, but also pretty civil. So please, be civil back, Rabbi. Do the right thing. Make an exception."

"Is that the sum total of your argument, Mark? It's not exactly talmudic."

"I'm not trying to be talmudic, Rabbi. I just want you to show Stan Melvin some compassion, and help him out of a jam."

"My first job here isn't to be compassionate, Mark. It's to be constant."

"Stubborn, you mean."

"Resolute."

"Full of s--t," I said, amazing myself a bit.

He put his hand on the window pane in front him, just the fingertips. "Is that supposed to shock me, Mark?"

"I don't know. Maybe's it's supposed to let you know how far you are from what anybody here considers normal rabbi-like behaviour. Rabbis are supposed to be sage, like Solomon, right? But we actually don't need you to be sage here; all you have to do is to be a tiny bit flexible, and help out a fellow Jew and human being. I can't believe that doesn't fit into your job description."

"Did you know, Mark, that in the Lurianic kabbalah the ritual mitzvot are considered as important as the ethical ones? The idea is that they exalt God, who is the agency of healing the broken world."

"How about Stan's broken marriage?"

"Aren't you being a bit dramatic?"

"No. That's the point. If Stan's brother-in-law doesn't get an aliyah, anything could happen. Really. His wife Brenda is a very strong-minded person. I mean you probably didn't notice last night, but Stan's backup stick is a $200 Easton composite, the most expensive stick you can buy. Brenda got it for him for his birthday, and Stan's terrified of breaking it; he says if he does Brenda will never forgive him for it. And he's probably right. That's why it's only his backup stick. And that's just a

hockey stick, Rabbi, not an aliyah for her brother."

"She could choose to blame me instead."

"Rabbi, this is Brenda Melvin we're talking about. She might choose to hate you, but she'll blame Stan."

"That's regrettable."

"Exactly. And you can prevent it. Just turn a blind eye to a rule that no one around here ever followed anyway, and life for Stan could go back to the status quo, one-two-three."

"The status quo is never what you think it is, Mark. Sometimes to make things better, first you have to make them a little worse."

"Rabbi," I said, telling myself to breathe, "are you aware that Stan was the person who convinced the rest of us to ask you to come play hockey with us? He was your ticket to the game."

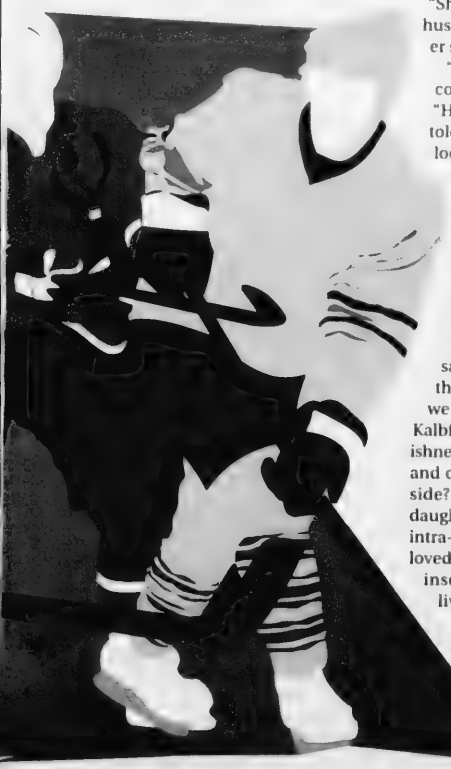
"Really? I didn't know that." He turned back to the window. "I'll have to thank him."

"I know how you can."

He didn't appear to have heard me. "Tell me something, Mark. What kind of hockey player do you think Isaac Luria would have been?

Breathe, I thought. "Goony," I said. "He would have spent a lot of time in the penalty box."

"Elusive," said the rabbi. "He would have been impossible to catch."



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I told the group about the rabbi's response at the Kiddush Klub that Saturday. Stan wasn't there; his attendance had been spotty since the dawn of the aliyah affair, which was ironic, because discussing the situation had lent a new urgency to our sessions, along with the rabbi's impending drop-dead date.

"It's like today's portion," said Ronny when I was done. "Mark's Abraham, and the rabbi's God. But is Stan Sodom or Gomorrah?"

"How can a guy be such a great hockey player, and such a terrible person?" said Matt. "It isn't right."

"It's humanity," said Ronny. "The important thing is what we're going to do for Stan. Maybe we should all talk to the rabbi."

"I've got a better idea," said Avi. "Kalbfleisch is playing hockey with us now? Fine, let him play. At the next game I'll fill him in. You guys can help by aiming him at me."

"You can't fill him in," I said.

"Why not?" said Avi.

"Well, for one thing he's a rabbi," said Matt Joseph. "He's probably non-violent."

"He's not a Hindu, Joseph," said Ronny. "He's from Cleveland."

"That's true," said Matt. "You know Mrs. Ginsberg, the older lady who wears a *talles* in the sanctuary sometimes?"

"She does it on the anniversary of her husband's death," I said. "It was his prayer shawl."

"Last week the rabbi told her she couldn't wear it anymore," said Matt. "He didn't do it in private, either. He told her in the lobby after the service. It looked like he wanted to make sure he had an audience. When she left she was crying."

"That settles it," said Avi. "It's filling-in time."

...

But Avi did not fill the rabbi in. He abstained for one simple reason: I asked him not to. I said it wasn't fair to rush to judgment, that there might be redeeming factors we couldn't see that could account for Kalbfleish's apparent pettiness and prickishness, even for the fact that he was an out and out bully. Why did I take the rabbi's side? Partly because I didn't want my daughter's bat mitzvah to be spoiled by an intra-shul civil war. But mostly because I loved watching him play hockey. He had inserted something into our weekly lives that was dangerously close to beauty. Every Wednesday night he managed to pull off a manoeuvre that was dazzling but novel, as though it had just occurred to him for the first time.

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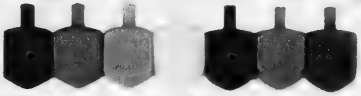

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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

His off-ice style might have been calculated enough that it approached sadism, but his hockey style was so devoid of planning it resembled athletic jazz. In fact, outside of his failure to backcheck, on the ice he actually wasn't an a--hole. He wasn't even a bad teammate. He gave up the puck regularly, and he didn't whine or carp like some talented guys I'd played with. He never upbraided anyone for failing to receive one of his perfect passes, or for directing a less than perfect one in his direction. True, he also rarely complimented anyone for making a nice play, but on the ice he wasn't a blowhard. On the ice he wasn't a phony. He was just a guy who didn't backcheck.

And my guiltier secret was this: as much as I liked watching him play hockey, I liked talking to him more. Because I could say anything to him. It was the same disjunction: ideologically he was uptight enough to make you wear a skullcap in his office; conversationally he was as permissive as Lenny Bruce.

"Do you believe that people have hidden functions in this world, Mark?" he asked me one afternoon.

"I believe they have one main function: to be decent. A mensch. Which is exactly what I'm asking you to be."

"I'm not talking about a duty, I mean an ulterior part to play, a secret role. Like Judas at the Last Supper, for Christians."

"How about a rabbi at a bar mitzvah, say, who relaxes the aliyah rules, for Jews?"

"Very clever. But that's a bit too obvious, Mark. I doubt it's in the cards for me."

"So what part is, rabbi? The hero?"

He made a soft sound like a laugh. "I can't think of a single person at this synagogue who would consider me heroic. Maybe Isaac Luria himself would, if he became a member. In the Lurianic scheme I might fulfil that function."

"Really?" I said. "What do kabbalists think about delusions of grandeur?"

"They don't think they're delusions," he said. "And they don't think they're grand." He looked at me. "What do you think, Mark?"

"The truth? I have no idea. Mind you, I have no idea what we're talking about, either."

"You need to figure it out," he said. "And sooner than later."

That's what talking to him was like: a conversation that on the surface sounded cogent, but that you never really truly understood while you were having it, possibly because it was half insane. There were only two predictable things about our discussions. At some point, after dismissing whatever new pitch I was making for Stan out of hand, he would issue a prophetic warning about time running out on me and my "cronies" that was worthy of Jeremiah. And every conversation with him also came shrouded in his own fatalism, as though he was convinced he was eventually going to make a morally irretrievable mistake, one everyone would pay for and he couldn't do anything to prevent. It was like a tale of two dooms.

And then the dooms came together.

It happened at our last game in December, three days before what was to be the last meeting of the Kiddush Klub. Stan had stopped showing up at the Klub completely by this time, but he was still coming out to hockey. In the locker room on this last Wednesday of the year he was there, as usual, getting dressed. For once, though, Rabbi Kalbfleisch was late.

The rabbi still hadn't arrived when the Zamboni driver finished our flood, and we ended up going out on the ice without him. We played the first 10 minutes or so that way, which felt undeniably strange – ungrounded and centreless somehow. It was actually a relief when I saw him come out of the locker room door, pulling his jersey down as he walked. He apologized, saying that he'd had a meeting that had run late, and that in the rush he'd forgotten his hockey sticks in his office.

"Does anyone have an extra stick I could borrow?" he said.

"Take my backup," I said. "We both shoot right."

"Your stick looks a bit short for me, Mark, thanks. Stanley, yours looks closer to my length. Do you mind?"

Stan looked up, as did most of us. None of us would have ever considered asking Stan to borrow his Easton, even if we needed it. But this was Kalbfleisch asking, and I could see Stan wavering.

> *No problem. No slapshots. I'll be careful.*

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"Rabbi, really," I said, "take mine. It's got a lot of goals in it."

But Kalbfleisch had eyes only for Stan. "Stanley?"

"Sure," Stan blurted. "Sure." He reached back behind the bench and handed the Easton to the Rabbi. "Just one thing. If you could maybe not take a slapshot with it. I think it might have a small crack in the shaft. If you don't mind."

"No problem," said the rabbi. "No slapshots. I'll be careful."

He took the stick and went over to the dark team's bench, getting there just in time for a line change, when meant he could step right out on the ice. A clearing pass came off the boards as he did; he picked it up, skated over our blue line, and with no hesitation at all pulled Stan's stick back over his right shoulder, and brought it down in a full slapshot motion I'd never seen him use before. The stick hit the ice before the puck, and snapped halfway up the shaft. The rabbi came to a stop, still holding the upper half of the stick. He bent down, picked up the remaining half, and skated over to our bench.

"My sincere apologies, Stanley," he said. "I don't know what got into me. It must have been an automatic reflex." He handed Stan the two halves of the stick. "I guess you were right about that crack," he said. Stan didn't say anything; he was looking at the remains of the Easton. Someone gave Kalbfleisch another spare stick, and he turned without another word and rejoined the play.

"I'll be right back," I said to Avi.

I stepped over the bench before he could say anything and went back into the hallway behind us. Our locker room was the second one down the hall. I went in and walked over to the rabbi's changing spot, where his wheeled hockey bag was pushed up against the bench. I rolled the bag back a foot or so. Lying under the bench were two white Koho sticks, with the letters "J.K." printed in magic marker on the taped handles.

I went back into the hallway and opened the nearest gate onto the ice surface. The play was in the far end, and the rabbi was coasting slowly toward his own blue line, his back to me. I skated as hard as I could at him, and grabbed the too-tight navy jersey just under his armpit, jerking him half-around in the process.

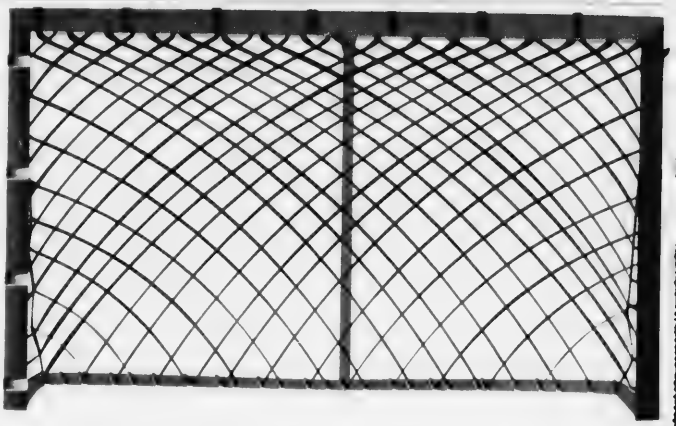
"You did that on purpose," I said.

"Mark?" His voice was surprised, but his eyes were less so. "What are you talking about?"

"Stan's stick. You broke it on purpose."

"That's ridiculous. Are you even supposed to be on the ice now?"

"You planned it, Rabbi. I was just in the locker room. You didn't forget your sticks.



They were on the floor behind your bag."

"They were? Unbelievable. I must be even more distracted than I thought."

"I always knew you were sort of a bastard, and a tyrant, but I didn't think you were actually a bad person. Not really bad. All the other rotten things you did had a code behind them, at least. But that was just a truly bad thing, all on its own. It was just cruel. Why would you do something like that?"

He let himself lean in closer to me, my left hand still buried in his jersey. His eyes weren't even remotely surprised, I realized. Just sad. "Somebody had to do something, Mark," he said. "And apparently it wasn't going to be you."

"You prick," I said. I dropped the glove on my right hand onto the ice. "You want to see me do something? I'll start now."

"No, you won't," Avi said. He was behind me, his hand simultaneously around my wrist like a vice.

"Avi, let go of me, I'm going to kill him."

"No, you're not," said Avi. I couldn't have moved my hand, I had the feeling, if I used both arms. "You're going to come back to the bench so we can finish the game."

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THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BACKCHECK

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

"It's sage advice Avram is giving you, Mark," said Kalbfleisch. "Wasn't that what you were always looking for, sageness?"

"It's sagacity, you psychopath," I said.

When we got to the bench Avi pushed me through the gate, and sat me down beside him. The rest of the team was staring, but I couldn't have cared less.

"Why did you stop me?" I said. "I wanted to go with him."

"Well, he's got three inches and maybe 30 pounds on you," said Avi. "Also, going with people is not your job. This is hockey. We have roles here, Pose. Some guys analyze. Some guys enforce."

"So enforce," I said. "I changed my mind. Fill him in. I give you permission."

"Excellent," he said. "Let me just pick my spot, and I'll do it."

On the ice Kalbfleisch had finished his shift, and was heading back to the bench. "Just one thing," I said. "No concussions, okay?"

"I won't touch his head," said Avi. "I promise."

"OK," I said. Kalbfleisch had taken a seat on the bench beside Walter, who was talking animatedly to him, gesturing with his hands. The rabbi kept his gaze on the game. "Maybe no broken bones, either, or visible marks," I said. "We have to be holistic here."

"I won't touch him at all," said Avi.

"What do you mean?"

"I'll just talk to him," he said.

"What are you going to say?"

"Don't worry about it. I'm just going to talk to him."

Which is exactly what he did. With about five minutes left in the game, Avi took a long pass from Ronny at centre and broke into the clear – at least for a moment. A dark blur went past our bench so quickly it took me a second to figure out what it was: Kalbfleisch was chasing him. He caught Avi at the blueline, lifted his stick from behind, took the puck, and wheeled back in the opposite direction, surprising everyone so completely that he was in on our goal before anyone knew it. Once there, he executed a toe-drag deke that was almost apologetic in its ease, a deke that said to Pietro in net, 'I'm going to start a deke, but with your permission I'm not even going to finish it, because just this slow-motion part will freeze you completely in your anticipation of what is about to come. And what is about to come is the puck going through your five-hole into the net right…now.' It was brilliant piece of non-deking, a deke sans deke, infinite less making infinite more. It might have been the best goal he scored all fall. He turned to coast back up the ice, and Avi, who'd been following him, met him at the blue line, bumping into him gently and continuing up the rink with him, an attached tandem, drifting the way players sometimes will. They were obviously engaged in conversation, but Avi's back was to me, and I had no idea what he was saying, or how Kalbfleisch was reacting to it.

The next day the rabbi resigned from the shul. He was gone by the weekend.

•••

My daughter Samantha had her bat mitzvah the following Saturday. She did a terrific job, which surprised me not at all. Despite my misgivings, the fill-in rabbi, a retired insurance agent with rabbinical certification, did a great job himself with the sermon afterwards, noting that Samantha had been a "sweet singer for Israel." Her friends threw their ridiculous soft candies at her, she ducked and squealed, and we all trooped through the lobby into the banquet hall to eat a variety of spicy eggplant and chick pea salads, and give our various speeches. Mine involved baseball, but I still got my wife to cry within 17 seconds of my opening. When I was done, Avi came over and shook my hand.

"Great speech, Pose," he said. "As usual, I had no idea what you were talking about."

We got a glass of wine each and wandered out into the lobby, and through the lobby back into the sanctuary. It was deserted except for the candy wrappers on the carpet. I looked at the ark and the gold lions flanking it. The lion on the left really could have used a coat of paint.

"So what did you say to him?" I said.

"Who?"

"Avi," I said. "Please."

"I asked him if he believed in God. He said he did. I said he didn't, and I had proof. He asked me what the proof was. I told him if he believed in God, he'd

> *I asked him if he believed in God. He said he did*

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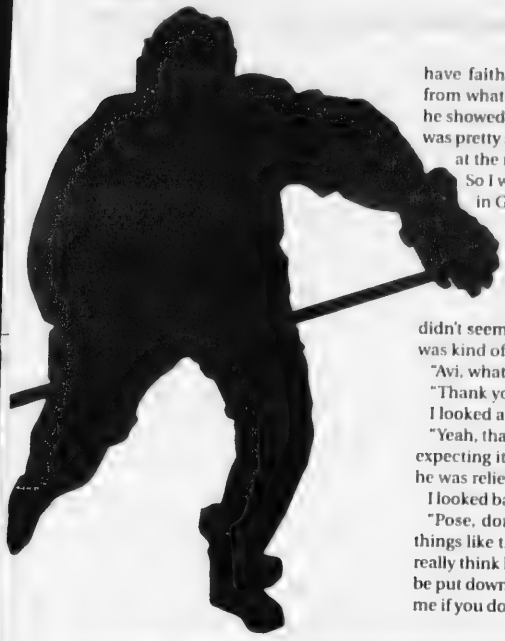


have faith that God would protect him from what was going to happen to him if he showed up at the rink next week. But I was pretty sure he wasn't going to show up at the rink. Or even at the shul again. So I was pretty sure he didn't believe in God, either."

I waited for him to go on, my best friend. But he took a sip of his wine instead. "So what did he say?" I said.

"That's the weird thing. He didn't seem scared at all, or even upset. It was kind of a letdown."

"Avi, what did he say?"

"Thank you."

I looked at him. "He said thank you."

"Yeah, that's all. Thank you. Like he was expecting it, or maybe hoping for it. Like he was relieved."

I looked back at the ark. "Maybe he was."

"Pose, don't do that, please. Don't say things like that unless you're serious. You really think he was waiting to be faced? To be put down? Like a guy with a fetish? Tell me if you do, it would help. Otherwise I'm just losing my touch."

"You're not losing your touch, Avi. But it wasn't a fetish."

"What then?"

"Tikkun olam," I said. "The world made whole."

He hit me on the shoulder with his free hand, not the one with the wine but the one closest to me, a short little punch that was still incredibly painful. It had always been a mystery to me how he did it. "F-- off," he said. "Be serious, you prick, I mean it. What do you mean the world made whole? What is that?"

"Who's Stan having do the aliyahs at Jordan's bar mitzvah now?" I said.

"The Pope," he said dangerously. "Ayatollah Khomeini, Hulk Hogan. Anyone he wants now, Mark, you know that."

"His brother-in-law?"

"Of course his brother-in-law. Where have you been? That problem's solved. Kalbfleisch is gone."

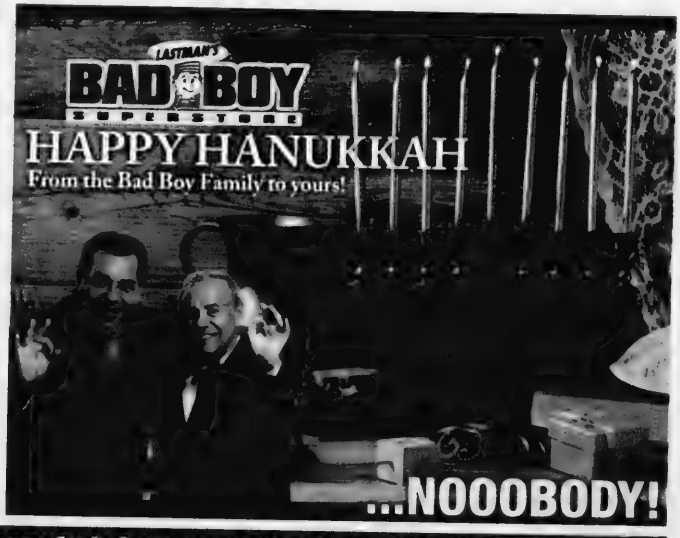
"Kalbfleisch is gone," I said. "And Stan's brother-in-law is getting his aliyah. And the Kiddush Klub will reconvene, stronger than ever. And we will play hockey like always, but somehow enjoy it more. And the world is healed. Tikkun olam."

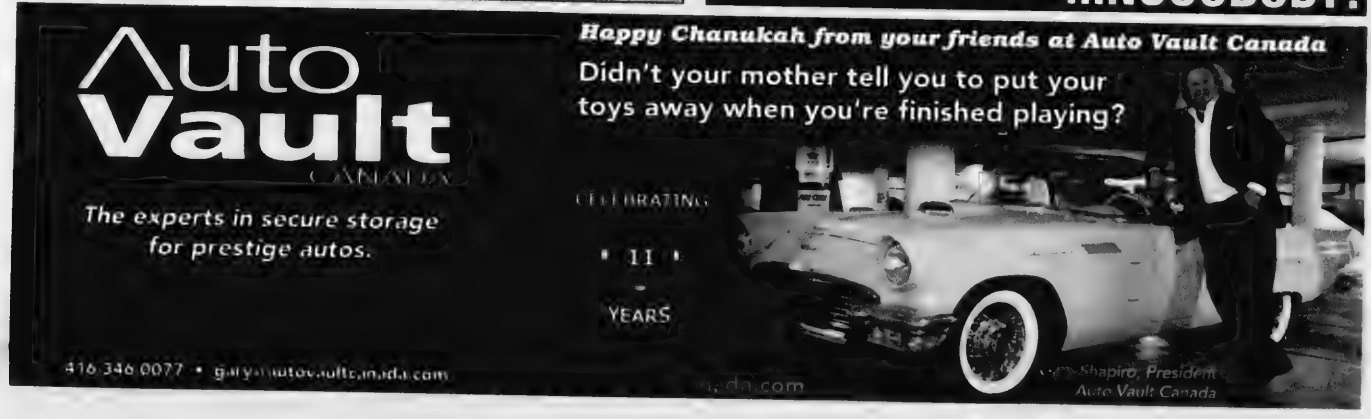
I waited for him to hit me again. But he didn't. Instead there was a pause – a Shakespearian one by Avi's standards. Then he raised his wine glass in a slow-motion semblance of a toast, not to me so much as to the space in general, to the lions rampant and ragged. To wonder. "I must be completely s--t-faced. It actually makes sense. The world made whole. And that was one wacked-out rabbi. Couldn't he have just put it in a sermon?"

There was no point in pushing the envelope, I thought. My shoulder was still tingling. I'd wait till tomorrow to tell him about the brand new Easton stick Stan had found sitting on his veranda, an envelope taped to it, a bar mitzvah card inside, inscribed with nothing but a single, hand-written word: "Regrets".

"It was a pretty nice goal, though," Avi said.

"Forget the goal," I said. "He backchecked." ■





Media companies lack sympathy for Israel

BARBARA KAY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There's an old joke that I used to find funny. A man is walking down the street in Paris, when he sees a pit bull attacking a little girl. He kills the dog and saves the child's life.

Afterward, he is swarmed by reporters. They say, "Tell us your name. Your fellow Parisians will love you when they see tomorrow's headlines: 'Hero saves girl from vicious dog.'

"But I'm not from Paris," the man replies.

"That's okay," say the journalists. "All France will love you when they see the headlines, 'Hero saves girl from vicious dog.'

"But I'm not from France," the man says.

"Oh well," the reporters respond. "All of Europe will love you when they see the headline ..."

"But I'm not from Europe," he interrupts.

"Well, where are you from?" they ask.

"I'm from Israel."

The next day's headline reads: "Israeli kills little girl's dog."

...

In October, a terrorist drove his car into a crowd at a light-rail station in Jerusalem, killing a three-month old baby and a woman before fleeing. The police pursued and eventually killed him. "Israeli police shoot man in East Jerusalem," the *Associated Press* reported. The headline was later changed to "Car slams into east Jerusalem train station." Only after social media protests forced *AP's* hand did a responsible headline emerge: "Palestinian kills baby at Jerusalem station."

Covering the same incident, *Sky News* ran a ticker at the bottom of the screen informing viewers, "Israeli police 'say' a driver has rammed his car into pedestrians in East Jerusalem in an 'intentional' attack causing several injuries." The internal quotes casted doubt on the reliability of the Israeli report, and yet another bulletin stated "Israeli police have clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's al-Aksa Mosque compound after Jewish nationalists announced plans to visit the site" with no caveats. Causality is offered here with no mention of the fact that, previously, rocks and Molotov cocktails had been thrown onto Jews praying at the Western Wall.

To appreciate the significance of these editorial decisions, consider the reaction if a *New York Times* headline following the October attack on Parliament Hill had been "Gun shoots bullets into monument."

That media bias against Israel exists is no longer a hypothesis to be proved. No reasonable observer can fail to concede that the media are disproportionately obsessed with Israel, or that Israel is held to a higher moral standard than other nations in its behaviour toward its avowed enemies. The vitriol can be astonishing, even in normally respectable publications.

A *Sky News* reporter compared the strikes on Gaza this past summer to the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. *Time* magazine claimed Israeli soldiers killed Palestinians to steal their internal organs, a blood libel of the most vile and brazen kind. The *New York Times'* Jerusalem bureau chief claimed stories of Hamas intimidation of journalists were "nonsense," even though *Times* reporters had documented several examples of it. Cartoonists routinely depict Israel with imagery that consciously resurrects a long history of Christian blood libels, the obscenities of Nazi-era *Der Sturmer* graphics and the more recent Big Lie of Holocaust inversion, with Palestinians as the new Anne Frank and Israel the Hitler.

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> *No reasonable observer can fail to concede that the media are disproportionately obsessed with Israel*

Operation Protective Edge provides a good background for analysis of media bias because its *casus belli* is so unambiguous. This was a war of necessity. The unprovoked, indiscriminately aimed and pan-Israel rocket attacks from Hamas, which terrorized all Israelis for weeks on end and threatened to bring Israel's economy to a standstill.

The discovery of the vast Gaza tunnels complex, with its stark implications for human tragedy and national cataclysm, sobered even the most ardent Palestinian sympathizers, foreign and domestic.

Widespread anti-Israel media bias is a charge anti-Zionists tend to wave away as a conspiracy theory. But the accusation has become untenable for any self-respecting observer. The moral clarity around this war has also inspired several brilliant and detailed proofs of media bias which, taken together, amount to a damning indictment of the mainstream media.

Especially notable in this line is the meticulously detailed analysis of *New York Times* bias against Israel by investigative reporter Richard Behar in the Aug. 21 issue of *Forbes* magazine. Behar notes that the *Times'* most important reporter in Gaza for the past few years, Abeer Ayoub, a Palestinian resident of Gaza, has used an image of Yasser Arafat as his profile photo on Facebook and boycotted all Israeli products.

Behar does offer words of praise for the *Globe and Mail's* Patrick Martin and the *CBC's* Derek Stoffel, among others, for their candour regarding Hamas's use of human shields, and penchant for firing rockets from schools. But no honest skeptic can read Behar's extensive report (42 pages long in print) and deny extreme bias pervades not just the *Times* but almost the entire mainstream media (with the *BBC* the most flagrant offender).

Matti Friedman, a journalist and author who worked as a reporter and editor in the Jerusalem bureau of the *Associated Press* from 2006 to 2011, has written a widely shared article explaining how and why so many media covering the Middle East are essentially telling their audiences that Jews are the "worst people on Earth." Friedman begins by noting a recent *New Yorker* article summing up world events over the summer. The article assigned one sentence each to the horrors of Nigeria and Ukraine, four sentences to the abominations of Islamic State and the rest – 30 sentences – to Israel and Gaza.

But Friedman isn't interested in bashing the *New Yorker*, or any other publication. He has a bigger story to tell. And "story" is the key word, because the central Israel narrative shows little variation in mainstream media. To measure the importance of a story to a news organization, Friedman writes, look at the staffing.

During his tenure at *AP*, there were 40 staffers covering Israel and the Palestinian territories – more than in China, Russia, India, the "Arab Spring" countries and all 50 sub-Saharan African countries combined. Exactly one stringer covered Syria before the Syrian civil war began, even though more lives have been lost in Syrian violence in the last three years than in Israel-Arab conflicts over the last century.

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Foreign reporters get skewed version of Israel

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Friedman says *AP* staffers in Israel quickly learned the rules governing what got published. Corruption in the Palestinian Authority? The bureau chief told Friedman that was "not the story." And yet Israeli corruption was covered thoroughly. During one seven-week period in November and December 2011, Friedman tallied 27 articles about various moral, political, cultural and social failings of Israeli society – more than all the stories critical of Palestinian society published in the previous three years.

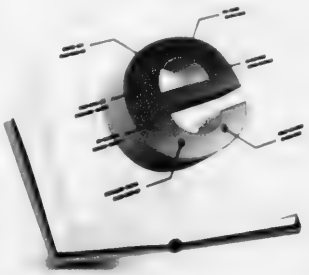
The Hamas charter, which calls for Israel's destruction, was never mentioned in print in all the time Friedman worked for *AP*.

When Israel imposed censorship, staffers on media *AP* reporters could say so, but when Hamas imposed censorship they could not.

That is because, Friedman writes, *AP* feared Hamas intimidation. As an editor, he admits, "I personally erased a key detail – that Hamas fighters were dressed as civilians and were being counted as civilians in the death toll" because of a threat to a reporter.

Most reporters in Gaza, Friedman says, "believe their job is to document violence directed by Israel at Palestinian civilians." The few journalists who wrote about Hamas rocket launches this summer were mostly "scrappy, peripheral and newly arrived players – a Finn, an Indian crew, a few others. These poor souls didn't get the memo."

> *AP staffers in Israel quickly learned the rules governing what got published*



While the Arab world is virtually closed to the media, Israel is absurdly open. Hundreds of reporters camp out in comfortable Israel. With its contentious society, a free press, much of which is sharply critical of Israel and Zionism, intellectual elites who lean heavily to the left and are well-connected internationally, these foreign reporters think they are tapping into the heart of Israeli opinion and character, when in fact they are getting a very skewed version of both.

Language plays a huge part. Few foreign reporters working in the Middle-East speak any of the region's native languages. Israeli political and intellectual elites speak English, but journalists are heavily dependent on translators and "fixers" to facilitate their information-gathering on the Arab side of the story. And when it comes to fixers there are no rules and regulations. Fixers often give journalists a laundered version of what is being said in Arabic, which they naively accept without further interrogation – not that much further interrogation is possible under the circumstances. Reporters often do not say what they are professionally bound to say: "This information could not be corroborated by independent sources."

Information on the Arab side is so unreliable that Palestinians prefer intel from Israel when it comes to their own internal affairs. In one ludicrous story, a *Ha'aretz* reporter detailed a planned coup by Hamas on Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas discovered by Shin Bet in early August, and passed on to Abbas. When the Palestinian president was scolded by Hamas leader Khaled Meshal for accepting Israeli information, Abbas replied, "I believe Israel's reports."

Israel is not blameless in allowing so much media bias to metastasize with so little strategic and systematic rebuttal. Threads of arrogance, incompetence and downright self-sabotage run through Israel's communications history, and far too little money and attention is lavished on what should be the most sophisticated PR machinery in the world.

Meanwhile, Palestinian spokespeople – usually articulate academics with significant experience in urbane media performance – have always remained on message.

While democratic Israelis confuse observers with open public dissension in a clashing cacophony of views from left and right, media-savvy Palestinians speak with one unified anti-Israel voice. They sidestep unpleasant questions and often lie but they always appear reasonable.

They have been quite successful under this assumption. Their narrative of a people that has always been there and has been displaced is simplistic and easy to grasp. The Zionist narrative – a long, convoluted account of wanderings and changing identities, political negotiations and treaties, legal texts and ancient documents, not so much.

Throw in a huge dollop of anti-Semitism – both latent and overt – in Europe, fever-pitched anti-Semitism throughout the entire Muslim world, enhanced communication tools online and via dedicated Islamism-laundering TV stations, and an increasingly Israel-hostile United Nations – and we end up with entire Western countries in which it is difficult to find a single media outlet governed by real objectivity – let alone sympathy – when it comes to Israel. ■

(Edited and excerpted from a speech presented Nov. 16 on behalf of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.)

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The serious side of comic

BY ROBERT GLUCK
JNS.ORG

Billy Crystal DAVID SHANKBONE PHOTO

Because he suffered a tough personal loss early in life, there has always been a serious side to the comedy of famed Jewish entertainer Billy Crystal.

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Crystal's father, prompting him to perform the autobiographical one-man show *700 Sundays* for another run on Broadway. The show, which first ran in 2004 and earned Crystal a Tony Award in 2005, ran again until Jan. 5, 2014, at New York City's Imperial Theater.

In *700 Sundays*, Crystal plays numerous characters that have influenced who he is today, from his youth in the jazz world of Manhattan through his adult years. Its themes – family and fate, love and loss, and growing up Jewish – display the multi-dimensional nature of a man mostly known for humour.

"The work he has created for stage, film and television has made an indelible impression," John Dow, vice-president of the JFK Center for the Performing Arts, which in 2007, awarded Crystal the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, told *JNS.org*. "It is the work of not just a humourist but also a humanist."

Giving back is something Crystal takes seriously. One of his most significant philanthropic endeavours is Comic Relief, and he serves as MC for its fundraisers. Created in 1986 by comedy writer Bob Zmuda to raise funds to help those in need, the non-profit organization has raised more than $50 million.

"I don't consider myself qualified to make an overall assessment of Mr. Crystal's impact on comedy. I do know that his impact on Comic Relief – the enduring success of its shows, its efforts to raise public awareness about the homeless and other pressing issues, and its fundraising efforts – has been ineffable," Mike Miller, managing director of Comic Relief, told *JNS.org*.

Born in Manhattan and raised in the Bronx and Long Island by Jewish parents, Crystal and his older brothers, Joel and Richard, were the sons of Helen, a housewife, and Jack Crystal, who owned and operated the Commodore Music Store, founded by Helen's father. The three brothers entertained friends and family by reprising comedy routines from such greats as Bob Newhart, Rich Little and Jewish star Sid Caesar, learning from records Jack brought home from the store.

With the decline of Dixieland jazz around 1963, Jack lost his business and died later that year at the age of 54 after suffering a heart attack while bowling.

"He worked so hard for us all the time," Crystal wrote of his father in the *700 Sundays* book. "He held down two jobs, including weekend nights. The only day we really had alone with him was Sunday. Sunday was our day for my two brothers and I to put on a show and make them laugh. And Dad would come in like three, four o'clock on a Sunday morning after working all weekend. Just as the sun came up, I would tiptoe over to their bedroom, which was right next to my room in the back, and I would quietly open the door just a little, and there they would be, Mom and Dad, lying there, looking so quiet and so peaceful together. And I would sit in the doorway waiting for him to wake up, just to see what we were going to do together that day. I just couldn't wait for Sundays. I couldn't wait for Sundays. He died suddenly when I was 15. I once calculated that I had roughly 700 Sundays. That's it, 700 Sundays. Not a lot of time for a kid to have with his dad."

Although loss is at the centre of *700 Sundays*, Crystal keeps the mood lighthearted.

"There is loss everywhere – jazz dies, his mom dies, neighbourhoods change, his beloved Yankees decline and memories fade. But Crystal, under Des McAnuff's tight direction, never gets maudlin," Mark Kennedy wrote for the *Associated Press*. "He always knows when to dispel the darkness with a laugh, as when he mimics the funeral director's lisping voice – 'My condolenchess to the family of the decheassed.'

That prompts Crystal to complain, 'My father's dead, and I have to talk to Sylvester the Cat?'"

During a versatile career in the entertainment industry, Crystal has found success in front of the camera, as a performer in film and television, and behind the scenes as a writer, director and producer.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Billy Crystal

Billy Crystal, seated, far left, on the cast of *Soap* in 1977.
ABC TELEVISION VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO

In 1977, he became a regular on the popular series *Soap*, playing the first openly gay character on a network television series. During the 1984 and 1985 television seasons, Crystal earned national acclaim for his role in *Saturday Night Live*. In 1997, he created, wrote and produced the critically acclaimed HBO series *Sessions*.

A Grammy Awards host three times and Oscar host eight times, Crystal has starred in many hit films, among them *When Harry Met Sally, City Slickers, The Princess Bride* and *Analyze This*. His name is also well known in Israel. In its 13th year, the Billy Crystal Project for Peace through the Performing Arts offers a wide range of workshops to both Jewish and Arab theatre artists and students, in a program aiming to create cross-cultural understanding through the common ground of theatre.

Crystal is not the first success story in his Jewish family. His uncle, Milton Gabler, led the way early on in Billy's life. Although he founded pioneering jazz label Commodore and later became a legendary producer for Decca, Gabler couldn't read a note of music or play an instrument. Instead, as his nephew says on the DVD *Billy Crystal Presents the Milt Gabler Story*, Gabler's accomplishments were almost solely a result of a "big heart and a great set of ears."

More of Crystal's serious side comes out on the DVD when he speaks about Gabler's courage in releasing Billie Holiday's controversial *Strange Fruit*, a song many other labels passed on.

"This wasn't about making a hit," Crystal says. "This wasn't about capitalism. This was about humanism. This is about civil rights. Here was this plump little Jewish guy who saw the truth in those lyrics. And after everyone said they didn't want to record it – including John Hammond – Milt said, 'Let's do it.' So that's part of his character – do what's right for people, we're all the same, and music makes us more equal." ■

SeeJN | Baycrest menorah

Seniors from the Donald and Elaine Rafelman Creative Arts Studio at Baycrest brave a recent cold and windy day to admire their finished art – a colorful menorah that can be seen in front of Baycrest's main entrance on Bathurst Street, Toronto. It will be on display through the holiday season for all to enjoy. Pictured, Baycrest studio staff and volunteers join their senior artists in front row, from left, Julia Neagu, Bea Fink, Ginger Howard Friedman and Bette Risen.

AMANDA PATERSON/BAYCREST PHOTO

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The Wave sparks questions among Arabs and Jews

LINDA GRADSTEIN
BAQA AL-GHARBIYE, ISRAEL

By the end of its two-week tour, thousands of Jewish and Arab Israeli high school students will have seen *The Wave*, a play about a classroom experiment that went too far, as students became swept up in Nazi-style ideology.

Based on a true story, the English-language play by ADG, an English-language theatre group based in Munich, was warmly received by Israeli students, who all study English in high school.

In the play, teacher Ben Ross tries to motivate his high-school students by starting a new movement called The Wave, complete with banners, armbands and slogans.

"Strength Through Discipline," the students yell, while offering a Nazi-style salute, "Strength Through Community" and "Strength Through Action."

The movement gradually turns violent, with students beating up anyone who is not a member of the group. In one scene, Laurie, one of the skeptical students, confronts Ross and asks him, "Did you hear that a Jewish kid got beat up?"

For the Arab students watching the play at the Al-Qasemi College in Baqa Al-Gharbiye, the "oppressors" are the Jews, while they, the Arab citizens of Israel, are the victims. While the 20 per cent of Israel's citizens who are Arab have full voting rights, they have long complained of institutionalized discrimination by the Jewish majority. The current political wrangling over a new bill to legislate Israel as the Jewish nation-state has only intensified these feelings.

The hundreds of Arab high school and college students crammed into the auditorium of the Al-Qasemi College in this Arab town in northern Israel followed the play closely. Although English is their third language after Arabic and Hebrew, the students were clearly engaged in the action.

"I really enjoyed the play, and despite the difference between our cultures, I got the idea clearly," Amir Qub, 16, told the *Media Line*. "God gave us a conscience and a brain to think, not just to follow anybody."

The play comes amid growing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in east Jerusalem over a site that is holy to Jews and Muslims. Some of these students said the play made them realize that Arabs and Jews are fated to live together in the state of Israel.

"We're living in Israel with Jewish people and we must look at them as human, not just a religion," Islam al-Faruja, 17, told the *Media Line*.

***The Wave* is based on a true story.**

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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"No one is better than the other, we are equal. We are the same, with the same God, living in the same land."

The play is partly sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. Some of the performances are for Jewish audiences, others for Arab audiences, and some for mixed groups of Jews and Arabs. Many Israeli high school students read the book *The Wave* as part of their English curriculum.

The actors interact with the audience, who participate in the show by becoming fictitious members of The Wave. At one point, almost all of the audience members were clapping along in rhythm during a Wave rally.

The play is also emotional for the five actors, four of whom are making their first visit to Israel. The company is based in Munich, Germany, and rehearsals took place there and in London. The show toured Norway before coming to Israel.

"I performed the same show with a different cast in Berlin," Jean-Paul Pfluger, who plays Ben Ross, told the *Media Line*. "At the end of the rally, when I have the line, 'You would have made great Nazis,' it obviously means something else in Berlin."

The Holocaust imagery is also potent in Israel, where almost 200,000 Holocaust survivors make their homes. One member of the cast, Adam Pelta-Pauls, 24, who grew up in Potomac, Md., says it is an important piece for him.

"My grandparents were both survivors, and it made it really personal for me really quickly, especially rehearsing in Munich and close to Dachau where so many of my people were interred, lived and died in horrible ways," he said. "It gave me a personal hand in making sure something like that doesn't happen again. At the same time, we have to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Pfluger said the theatre offers a chance for Jews and Arabs to meet in a non-political space.

"The whole reason we perform the show in Israel is as a means of a dialogue," he said. "A theatre is a neutral space that can welcome both Arabs and Jews into the same space, and hopefully it's a really tiny drop in the ocean [as we] work toward some kind of resolution."

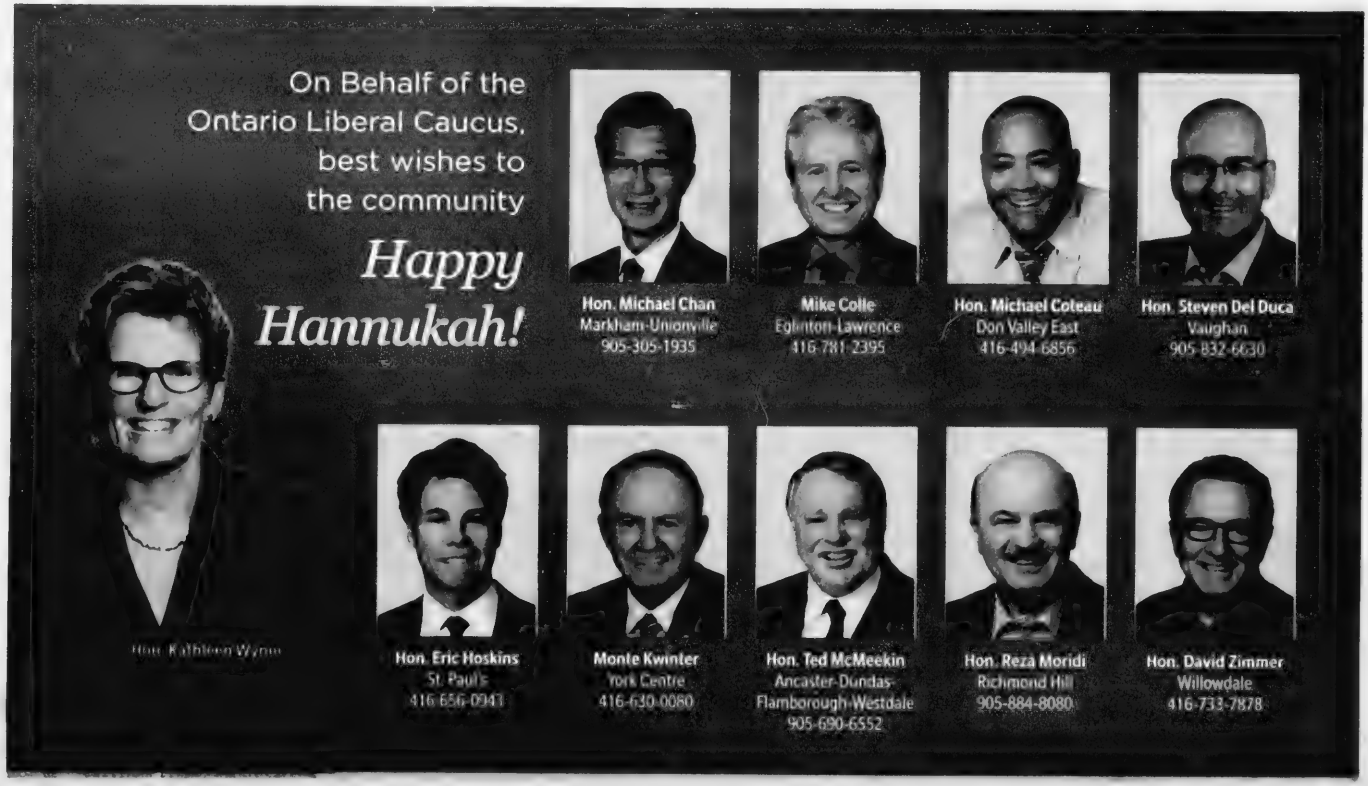
Or you can take the reaction of college student Heba Younes. "I think it's an outstanding play, it was very awesome," she said enthusiastically. "The actors are really good and had so much emotion. I was shocked that it was a real story." ■

The Media Line
Themedialine.org

SeeJN | Life-saving chanukiyah

ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

A young boy holds up a cardboard chanukiyah resembling an Iron Dome.



Tasmanian synagogue started by British

SHIRLEY KELLERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My husband Joe, was invited to speak at the Australian Homeopathic Association Conference in Hobart, Tasmania, in Australia, the weekend of Oct. 24, the same weekend as the Shabbos Project.

I was thrilled to discover that not only is there a synagogue in Hobart, but it is the oldest remaining synagogue in Australia.

I emailed the synagogue, and received a response from Tony O'Brien, a volunteer. He said there were no Shabbos Project events planned, but he agreed to meet with us, show us around and share some synagogue history.

I learned beforehand that the synagogue had been built mainly because of the efforts and generosity of a Jewish ex-convict, Judah Solomon.

He and his brother, Joseph, successful businessmen in England during the Napoleonic wars were caught trading stolen goods during the aftermath, a period of unemployment, poverty and crime. They were sentenced to death and this sentence was commuted to transportation for life to the penal colony in what was known at that time as Van Diemen's Land – now Tasmania.

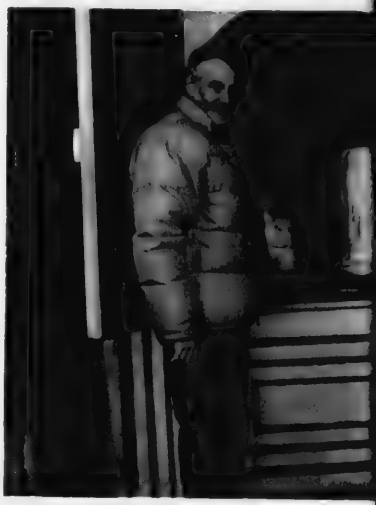
Unlike the majority of convicts, the Solomon brothers arrived with their own money and eventually, while still convicts, were able to start their own business. They did very well, expanding their business and buying land. They were given conditional pardons after 12 years. Tony told us that Joseph was able to return to England but Judah remained in Tasmania.

There have been free Jews in Tasmania since 1804. The early arrivals, as well as the convicts were busy just trying to survive. It was not until the 1830's that a true Jewish community was forming and the need for a permanent synagogue was felt. Until that time, services were held at various venues, one of which was Temple House, the warehouse of Judah Solomon.

At the time, the governor was freely giving land grants to build churches. He refused, however, to give a land grant to build a synagogue. Judah donated some of his own land, on the same property as his home.

As it turned out, the synagogue was only three blocks from our hotel. We almost missed it. The building itself while lovely, is very unassuming, sandwiched between two other buildings. The rest of the original property, after passing through many hands was ultimately sold to the city and is now the police station. This we learned from Tony when I asked why there was no security.

Tony was waiting for us. Of course, I had to ask what a nice Jewish boy was doing



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convict

Synagogue volunteer Tony O'Brien in front of the Aron Kodesh (left) and greeting Shirley Kellerstein at the synagogue (right). JOE KELLERSTEIN PHOTOS

> *There has been free Jews in Tasmania since 1804*

with the name Tony O'Brien. He told us he is a convert, one of a few in the congregation. He is one of several members who volunteers his time to give tours of the synagogue. His official position, for which he was trained by a rabbi in Melbourne, is that of prayer leader and he does so regularly. He was extremely knowledgeable about the building itself as well as its history and politics.

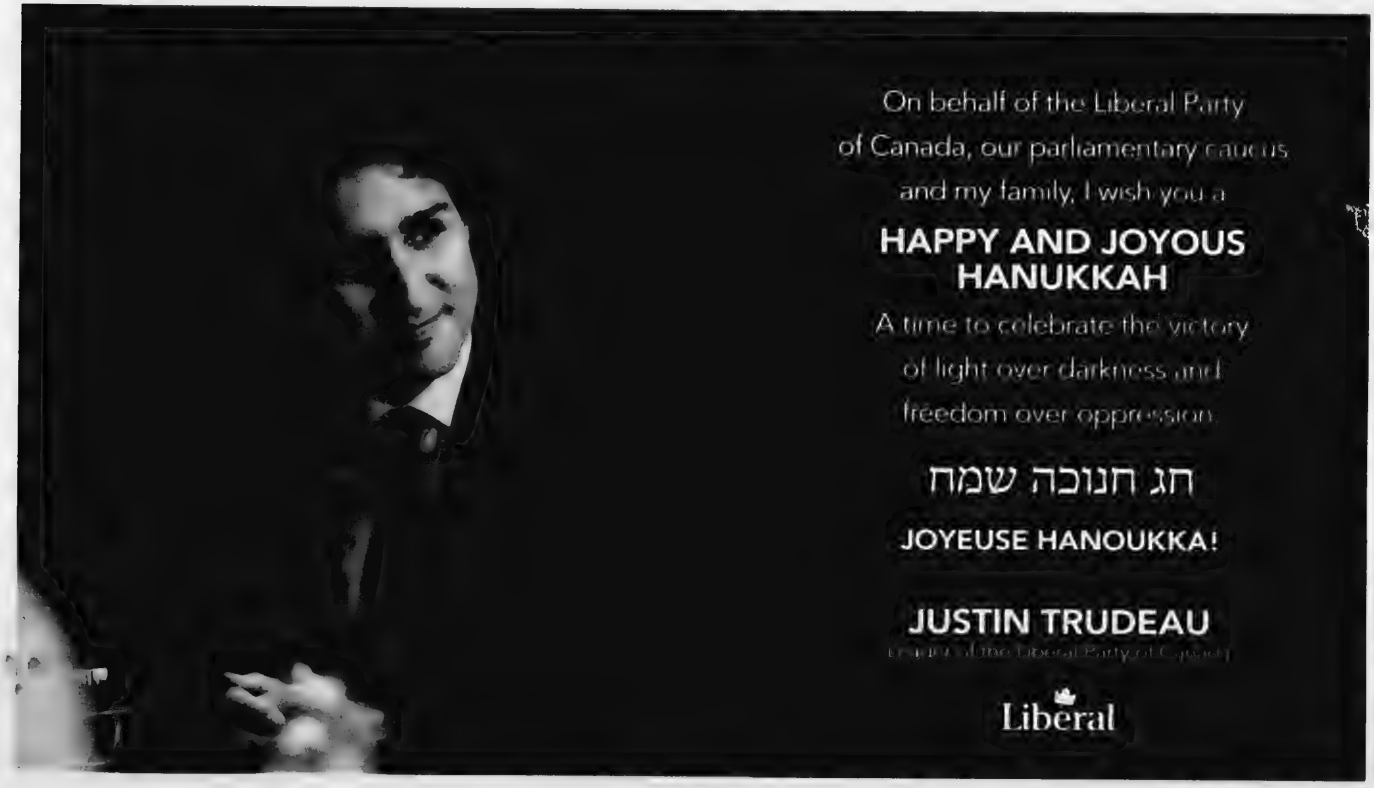
To me, the synagogue looked like a typical Sephardi structure with the Aron Kodesh at the front and the bimah in the centre with the seats on three sides. There was, of course a women's gallery upstairs. When I commented, Tony said that it was designed in the Egyptian style by James Alexander, a Scots convict who had never seen a synagogue in his life.

It was beautiful: simple, with dark wood benches and railings around the Aron Kodesh and the bimah, and a very old brass chandelier which is very much in need of refurbishing. The congregation is, in fact, refurbishing the shul bit by bit.

Interesting enough, the Aron Kodesh does not face Jerusalem and there is a plaque on the wall indicating the correct direction. I was totally confused about directions in Australia.

The synagogue has some wonderful treasures. It has a beautiful silver case and the scrolls that were donated from India in the early '50's, but in fact are thought to be Syrian in origin and very old. There is also a Sefer Torah on display which was one of many found in piles in a Prague synagogue after World War II. Very interesting to me as well was the convicts' bench where the Jewish prisoners were escorted in and guarded on both sides by armed soldiers. It has been turned into a bookshelf.

As with all old synagogues, there is a special feeling and I can't help but think and try to tie things together in my mind. So much of the history of Australia is based on the struggles of the convicts. A tour guide at the Port Arthur Penal Colony pointed out, "If the convicts survived their sentence, 90 per cent of them became successful, upstanding citizens." Many people we spoke to could trace their roots back to the original convicts. ■



Island Jews: Barbados' surprising Jewish history

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

White sand beaches, cerulean skies and ribbons of lush palm and mahogany trees: It may not scream Jewish history, but Barbados is steeped in it, with a Jewish presence dating back to the 1600s.

It's also the unlikely site of the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere and, because this year marked the shul's 350th anniversary, I was granted a week's respite from the Canadian winter and sent by the Barbados Tourism Authority to write about the island's Jewish roots.

On a balmy November day interrupted by sheets of aggressive rain, I visited Nidhe Israel, an elegant coral building originally built in Bridgetown, Barbados' capital, in 1654, and restored in 1983. A UNESCO world heritage site, it's adjoined by a Jewish cemetery, a mikvah and a Jewish museum that opened in 2008.

I was met by Celso Brewster, the museum manager. A native Barbadian who recently discovered he has Jewish ancestry on both sides of his family, he showed me the crumbling tombstones of the island's early Jews, and the 17th-century mikvah, which, until its excavation in 2008, had been buried beneath a pile of rubble.

"We're very glad we have it," Brewster said, nodding at the synagogue. "It looks small, but it has held over 300 people."

From December to April – peak tourist season – Friday night services are held there, often attended by Jews visiting from elsewhere. During off-season, the local community, consisting of just 16 families, holds services in a house that was turned into a Conservative shul in the 1960s.

While the Jewish presence in Barbados is modest – there are 50-odd Jews to the island's total population of 300,000 – their historical impact has been sizable.

Jews came to Barbados in two distinct migrations: The first, arriving in the 1650s, consisted of Sephardi Jews fleeing the Portuguese Inquisition in Brazil.

They brought technological expertise that advanced the burgeoning sugar cane industry, but by the late 17th century, they were no longer permitted to own slaves,

Nidhe Israel, located in Bridgetown, Barbados, is the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTOS

Above, Celso Brewster, manager of the Jewish museum, inside Nidhe Israel. Right, Paul Altman, at his office in Bridgetown.

> *By 1750, Bridgetown's population of 10,000 included 800 Jews.*

and they became merchants and shopkeepers. By 1750, Bridgetown's population of 10,000 included 800 Jews.

By the late 1800s, intermarriage, assimilation and emigration saw the Jewish community become virtually obsolete. In 1831, Nidhe Israel was destroyed by a hurricane, and, though rebuilt several years later, in 1925 it was sold and converted for commercial purposes.

The Jewish community was revived in the 1930s, this time comprised of Ashkenazi Jews fleeing Europe. The community that grew out of this in the ensuing decades had little association with Nidhe Israel, and was largely unconcerned when, in 1983, the government slated the building for demolition.

It was Henry Altman, a prominent Barbadian Jew who's since passed away, and his son Paul, who took up the cause of salvaging the synagogue, leading to its restoration and re-consecration.

I met Paul, a successful real estate developer, former president of the Barbados National Trust and grandson of the first Jew to arrive in Barbados from Poland in 1931, at his Bridgetown office.

"What got my father really upset was that the government said they needed to remove a piece of the Jewish graveyard," Altman recalled. "My wife and I went to the Barbados museum and found pictures of what the old shul had looked like... I took the pictures to the then prime minister and he said, 'If you can find the money to restore this, I will give it to the Jewish community.' We said, 'Done'....We have an obligation to these people that are buried right there."

The money Altman raised mostly came from private donors, but he garnered support from international organizations like the Commonwealth Jewish Council and the World Jewish Congress.

Still, the local Jewish community hasn't been overly "keen" about the restoration, he said.

"They didn't understand what the synagogue was like – how beautiful or important. They were used to the little synagogue they'd been using, had no memories in the old one. 'Who are you doing this for? they said. You're wasting money and time.'"

Altman noted many have since come around to the idea, but that rift hasn't quite healed.

"They still refer to it as 'Paul's synagogue,'" he said.

Altman was evasive when I ask if it's ever lonely being a Jew in Barbados – one who is, I can't help wondering, somewhat estranged from the Jewish community itself.

"I don't have to go to synagogue every Friday night," he said firmly, "But if you take the skin off me, you'll find that 99.9 per cent of what I'm all about is this tradition." ■

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Inside

More funds for survivors
Claims Conference will triple 2015 allocation for 11 Canadian agencies that help Holocaust victims. **PAGE 12**

CUPW sues for defamation
Postal workers target Wiesenthal CEO Avi Benlolo and *Sun Media* for segment on Gaza war protest. **PAGE 14**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:17 p.m.	5:26 p.m.
Montreal	3:54 p.m.	5:04 p.m.
Toronto	4:24 p.m.	5:32 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:10 p.m.	5:26 p.m.
Calgary	4:12 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Vancouver	3:57 p.m.	5:11 p.m.

The politics of conversion

For some, joining the Jewish People involves pitfalls and heartache. How can we get it right? **PAGE 8**

Jewish students mobilize against BDS

Activists fight anti-Israel motions on three Montreal campuses. **PAGE 23**

New beit din vows to help agunot

Court pledges to be aggressive and transparent, rabbi says. **PAGE 24**

Play takes on Quebec nationalism

DeliMax explores experience of Jewish community in the 1980s. **PAGE 31**

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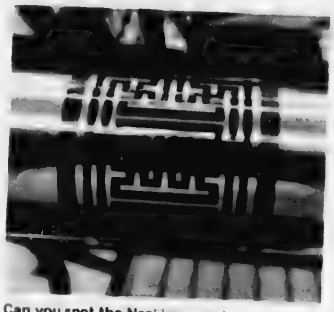
Waterloo menorah vandalized, and lions make political statement

Chanukah story comes to life

An electric menorah outside the Chabad centre in Waterloo, Ont., was repaired after it was vandalized last month. Rabbi Moshe Goldman told *CTV News* the main stem was snapped and some branches were broken off, but he doesn't blame anti-Semitism. "I think it was... a very stupid drunk person who shouldn't have had that last beer." He said repairs plus new security cameras would cost $10,000, which he hopes to pay for with donations. But he said the fact the menorah, like the one in the time of the Maccabees, would be ready for the holiday, was for him a "tremendous personal re-experience of the Chanukah story."

Swastika gift wrap flap

Hallmark Cards Inc. apologized and ordered wrapping paper with a pattern resembling a swastika removed from U.S. stores last week. "As soon as we were made aware of the situation, we began taking steps to remove the gift wrap from all store shelves," Hallmark said. "We sincerely apologize for this oversight and for any unintended offence." Hallmark said the silver and blue paper's intricate design was meant to represent a type of vessel and any embedded swastika design was unintended. The drugstore chain Walgreens said Dec. 15 it would remove the paper from its shelves after a Los Angeles woman complained. "I couldn't believe my eyes. I had no idea what to do," distressed shopper Cheryl Shapiro told KNBC in Los Angeles. "I came home and spoke to my rabbi. He couldn't believe it."



Can you spot the Nazi imagery in an L.A. shopper's photo of the offending paper?

They don't like neo-Nazis, either

A 45-year-old neo-Nazi activist dressed in a full military-style uniform was mauled by three lions at the Barcelona Zoo Dec. 14 after climbing into their enclosure. Justo Jose was taken to hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries after firefighters used hoses to distance the animals from him. Zookeepers said the lions were just trying to play with him. It's unclear if Jose was staging a political protests similar to others he'd held this fall, during which he was arrested by police. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY FLASH90

Gematria

5

The number of men arrested last week for making online threats against a shul in Herault in southern France. Five people were also arrested in France last week in connection with the killing of four people at Brussels' Jewish museum last May. One man was extradited to Belgium to face murder charges.

78

The age of former Israeli Labor party leader Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who resigned from the Knesset last week, citing a medical condition.

Quotable

66

We are just continuing what we have been doing for generations, which is buying the Land of Israel.

— Jerusalem city councillor Arieh King, the director and founder of the Israel Land Fund.
See full interview on page 42.

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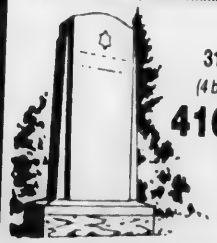

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Letters to the Editor

Israel and democracy

In the article "What you need to know about Jewish state bill," (Nov. 27) there is one item that needs to be addressed. The article states that "Israel's declaration of independence defines it as a Jewish and democratic state."

No, it does not. The declaration of independence does not contain the word democracy or democratic at all. It does state the following:

"The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

To be sure, these are understood as democratic principles by most people. There is nothing in the proposed Basic Law that reduces or negates any of these principles, without mentioning the word democracy.

Alas, some of these principles are being violated by the same people who oppose the bill. A pending bill, referred to as the Israel Hayom law, aims at shutting down the widest circulation Israeli newspaper. It seems the word democracy has different meanings to different people.

Michael Salamon
Toronto

Right cause, wrong case

Jewish groups rushing in to the Ferguson, Mo., situation in a misguided drive for social justice bring shame upon our community ("Are Jews and blacks still allies?" Dec. 4).

Our tradition teaches that we must judge fairly and blindly based on the facts, which very early in this case showed the angry mob in the streets and on the airwaves to be bearing false witness against the police officer, Darren Wilson. That was confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt by Michael Brown's autopsy, and finally put to rest by the grand jury from which no testimony or evidence was held back.

Those who ignore all this are actually perpetuating against Wilson what they claim to care about: a social injustice.

The cause was right, but the case was wrong.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Rescue vs collaboration

In our rush to judgment, it behooves us all to reflect on the difficult choices Reszo Kasztner faced in negotiating with Adolf Eichmann ("When rescue is not collaboration," Dec. 4). Yes, he did rescue many Jews, but his conduct still raises many questions.

The Nazis did not want another messy Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Kasztner's job was to lull most Hungarian Jews destined for extermination into a false sense of security. In return, Kasztner could pick a handful of Jews for safe passage out of Nazi-occupied Europe. Could he not have been a little more ambiguous about the perils and the fate that awaited most Hungarian Jews?

And why did he feel compelled to testify in favour of SS Col. Kurt Becher and other Nazi officers at Nuremberg after the war?

It is not true that Jews judge their own kind to a harsher standard than the Righteous Gentiles, as Gaylen Ross would have us believe.

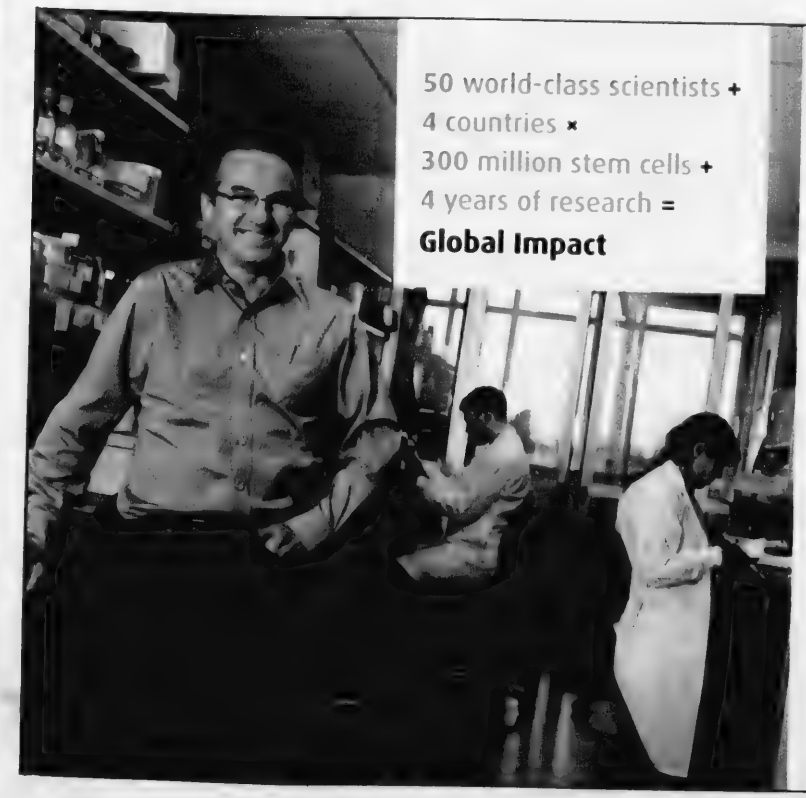
Moshe Kraus worked with Carl Lutz, the Christian Swiss diplomat, to save tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews. He was probably one of many unsung Jewish heroes who laboured tirelessly to save their fellow Jews and at much greater personal risk than Kasztner.

If Gaylen Ross sees Kasztner suspended in limbo between the desperate Jew and Lutz, the guardian angel, then place Moshe Kraus, a real Jewish hero, standing right next to Carl Lutz.

Joe Ronn
Outremont, Que

For more letters this week, please see **www.cjnews.com.**

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*



Congratulations, Dr. Andras Nagy, on defining a new paradigm in medical research.

A worldwide team of stem cell researchers, led by Dr. Andras Nagy of Mount Sinai's Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, has broken new ground by creating a complete molecular directory of the pathways by which stem cells reprogram.

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Bad behaviour and lashon hara

Where do we draw the line between gossip and slander, and calling out misdeeds? Perhaps the answer lies in a return to the fundamentals of humility.

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: We are currently confronting an over-abundance of bad behaviour. From the rabbinic world to media personalities, from parliamentarians to renowned celebrities, stories of abusive sexual and interpersonal conduct have been filling the front pages of our media.

On one level, we are gratified that victims of abuse and assault are finding the courage to confront their perpetrators. Nobody should be able to hide immoral and potentially criminal behaviour behind the mask of celebrity or power – or even worse, religious authority.

But we must also be mindful of our tradition's concern with lashon hara – gossip and slander – and recognize the ease with which one's reputation can be damaged, or even irrevocably destroyed, by accusations that have not yet been subject to judicial process.

Where do we draw the line between calling out terrible behaviour and exercising restraint?

Rabbi Finegold: It's a fine line. Lashon hara, though, is not a tool designed to protect the guilty.

We need to create an environment where victims do not feel ashamed to speak out. At the same time, we must remind our communities not to be back-seat drivers to the judicial process.

This latter point is far more damaging in the long term, in my view, because not only does the alleged crime get blown up to epic proportions by people who know few, if any, relevant facts, it also puts the victim in the spotlight repeatedly, which might prevent future reporting of similar or related incidents. I wonder how we might change the tenor of social discussions of pending cases if we only say things we would be willing to say directly to the alleged perpetrator.

Emmanuel Levinas speaks of the face of the other as the beginning of ethics – facing the other is akin to facing the humanity of the other and recognizing one's social obligation to the other. I think of this when I hear rabbis denounce others in different denominations for not being authentic Jews. Would they be able to walk up to someone, look them in the eye, and say, "You are not an authentic Jew because you pray in a congregation that gives women aliyot"?

Perhaps a reminder that believing someone is guilty does not rob them of humanity would be a good first step.

Rabbi Scheim: Face-to-face encounters would definitely prevent some of the terrible behaviours that occur behind the veil of anonymity. The incredibly vicious comments on online news sites would rarely be presented in so cruel a fashion were the writer not able to hide behind a pseudonym and a computer screen.

Perhaps what is needed in this age of terrible celebrity behaviour is a return to the fundamentals of humility. Moses is described by our Torah as "the most humble person in the world," and today's mighty and powerful might follow his example and refuse to allow their celebrity to overcome their humanity.

Several years back, Rabbi Aaron Lichtenstein visited a Jerusalem synagogue. A friend in attendance shared with me his shock when the great scholar was given the honour of *ptichah* (opening the Ark). Obviously, the gabbai must have not recognized Rabbi Lichtenstein, for someone of his stature would have merited a much more major Torah honour. But Rabbi Lichtenstein happily opened the Ark and wasn't the least bit troubled by being treated as "one of the people." Clearly he understood, as did Moses, that greatness and humility are not mutually exclusive.

Rabbi Finegold: It is unfortunate, but many celebrities – rabbinic or otherwise – choose to exploit their fame rather than channel it toward something more positive.

Maimonides advises that a person who has a tendency toward bloodshed should gravitate toward shchitah (the practice of ritual slaughter) so as to not sublimate something that might be harmful to them and others. Similarly, he says that one who is drawn toward theft should become a tax collector and thereby take other people's property in a legal and acceptable manner. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves why we became rabbis, and find ways to negate any excessive sense of self-importance.

Lashon hara, on the other hand, seem to be much more pervasive. Perhaps we need a collective brainstorm to figure out how to channel into something productive, instead of gossiping among ourselves in the pews. ■

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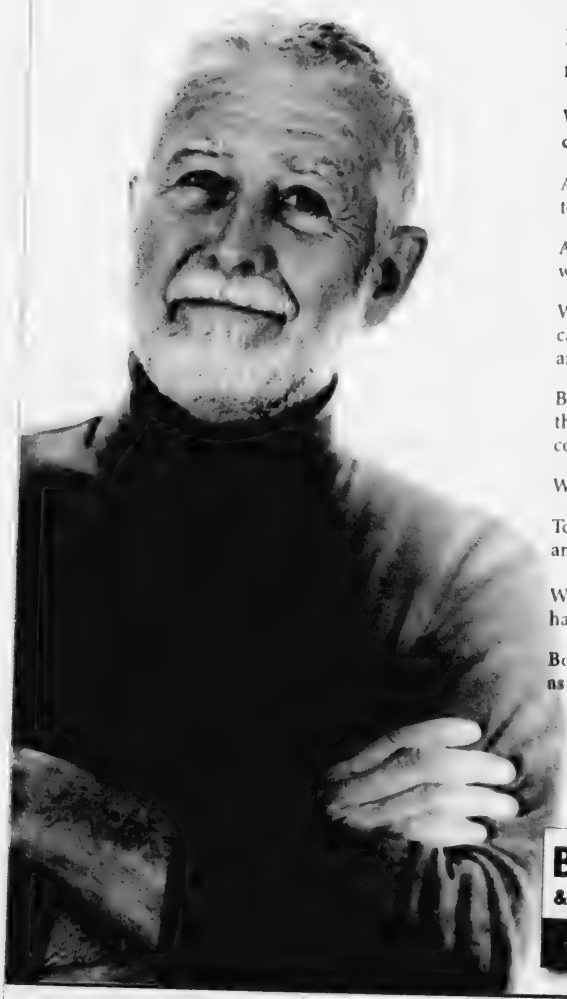

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From the Archives | Menorah lighting

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Rabbi Samuel Cass lights a menorah on the first night of Chanukah in Holland, in 1944 or 1945. Rabbi Cass was born in Toronto and served as senior Jewish chaplain in the Canadian Army during World War II and its aftermath, from 1942 to 1946. He went on to assist in the reorganization of Jewish communities in Belgium and Holland that were liberated by the Canadian forces, and he also worked with concentration camp survivors.

SeeJN | Problem solvers

Robbins Hebrew Academy Grade 5 students collaborate and used their Chromebooks to research their recent unit on problem solving. Pictured, from left, are Miles Kirsh, Jonah Weinberg and Koby Gottlieb.

From Yoni's Desk

Fake it till you make it

In 1993, *Maclean's* magazine contracted Jerusalem-based photographer Ricky Rosen to illustrate a cover story about the Oslo accords. The photo she turned in to the Canadian news weekly was unquestionably striking: two young boys standing with their backs to the camera, arms around each other's shoulders. One had on a kippah. The other wore a keffiyah.

The image suggested hope for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. If these children could see beyond a history of violence and hatred to discover true friendship, the picture implied, surely the people they stood in for would see the light – if not immediately, then eventually.

Last week, Rosen's famous shot was revealed as a fake. The two boys, it turns out, were both Israelis, residents of the Jewish section of Jerusalem's Abu Tor neighbourhood. The keffiyah was a prop supplied by Rosen – she usually kept it in her car so that Palestinians wouldn't throw rocks at her vehicle when she was on assignment in the West Bank.

The kippah was a prop, too. The purportedly "Jewish" boy did not usually wear one.

Rosen argued in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, which broke the story of the photograph's origin, that her image was never meant to depict real life and, therefore, shouldn't be considered a hoax. "My photo is not fake, because it doesn't pretend to document an actual time, place or personality," she said. "Rather it is a symbolic illustration of peace and coexistence."

The veteran photographer suggested that she herself was little more than a prop in the picture's germination. Rosen told the *Forward* that *Maclean's* requested that exact shot: "The magazine's art director was so specific in what he wanted that he even drew her a picture – one boy in a yarmulke, the other in a keffiyah shot from the back walking down a long road, which was supposed to symbolize the road to peace. He didn't care whether the boys were actually Israelis or Palestinians."

In fact, Rosen told the *Forward* she didn't even attempt to find a Palestinian boy for her picture. "I didn't look, because I thought it would be a very difficult thing," she said. "The relations had completely broken down after the first intifadah, and Palestinians were very fearful of being seen as collaborating with Israelis, because collaborators were being killed."

The origin story of Rosen's photo calls into question the level of trust consumers place in the media. Readers and viewers expect – rightfully – that reporters, editors and photographers will present the plain facts. If dramatic license is to be invoked, as was the case with Rosen's image, it's only fair for that to made clear at the outset. Otherwise, the way the information is processed can be irreparably skewed.

And yet, the image of the two boys lives on, only with a different sort of power. It is no longer a factual document, but an aspirational one. It may have been staged, but it offers a degree of hope that, at some point, Jewish and Palestinian children will stand together for real, arms entwined, their dark history a thing of the past. Sometimes you have to fake it till you make it.

■ — YONI

ESSAY

Talmudic Encyclopedia looks to an online future

Toby Klein Greenwald

A modest doorway on a tree-lined Jerusalem street, the side entrance to the elegant 90-year-old Yeshurun Synagogue, leads to Yad HaRav Herzog, which hosts, among other projects, a venture that is a momentous historical milestone in Torah scholarship.

This is the home of the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* (*Encyclopedia Talmudit*).

The importance and popularity of the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* is in its accessibility to both scholars and lay people who want to understand concepts within the world of Torah knowledge. Its reliability, accuracy and condensed style, is unparalleled in halachic literature.

In1942, Rabbi Meir Berlin (Bar-Ilan), the son of the Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin), envisioned assembling all of the Torah texts written and transmitted from the time of revelation at Sinai to the present day, primarily out of fear of losing the Torah together with the Jews in the Holocaust.

Rav Berlin engaged Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, one of the greatest scholars of that generation, who had the phenomenal ability to summarize and organize complicated material into a form that would be easily understood. It was Rav Zevin who determined the over 2,000 entries that would comprise the *Talmudic Encyclopedia*, and who decided on the writing style and the extent of comprehensiveness. He was joined by some of the most erudite scholars alive. The first volume of the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* was published in 1947. To date, 33 volumes have been published, and the number will reach about 70 when the project is completed.

The *Talmudic Encyclopedia* has garnered the praise of rabbinic scholars from across the spectrum, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Avraham Shapira, Rav Yehezkel Abramsky, the Novominsker, Belzer and Lubavitcher Rebbes and others.

Rabbi Avraham Steinberg receiving the Israel Prize in 1999.

Rav Zevin died in 1978. He was replaced as editor-in-chief by Rav Avraham Farbstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Chevron in Jerusalem. In 2006, Rabbi Prof. Avraham Steinberg accepted the position of head of the editorial board of the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* and director of Yad Harav Herzog. He is spearheading the development and completion of the *Talmudic Encyclopedia*.

Born in a displaced persons camp after World War II, Rabbi Steinberg immigrated with his parents as an infant to Israel in 1949, studied at Yeshivat Mercaz Harav and Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School and served as a medical officer in the Israeli Air Force. He also trained in pediatric neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine & Montefiore Hospital Medical Center, Bronx, N.Y.

Today he is a senior pediatric neurologist and director of the medical ethics unit at Shaare Zedek Medical Center and a world recognized expert in medical-halachic research. His major, groundbreaking work is the seven-volume *Encyclopedia Hilchatit Refuit* (in Hebrew) for which he received the Israel Prize in 1999. He has served as an adviser on medical ethics to the Knesset and to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and has been involved in halachic aspects of modern medical issues with the most prominent rabbinic authorities, particularly with the late rabbis S.Z. Auerbach, Y.S. Eliashiv and E.Y. Waldenberg.

The speed with which the project is moving forward is partly stimulated by the recent substantial contribution by Dov Friedberg of Toronto. The project directors say they hope that others like Friedberg, will recognize the significance of having their family names, or those of their loved ones, connected with this momentous project.

Since Rabbi Steinberg took over the leadership, they began to publish one volume a year, and last year they published two volumes. In the coming years the objective is to publish three to four volumes annually in order to complete the entire project by the year 2024.

"I think the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* is one of the most important works in our generation, and perhaps beyond. It has no competitor. Its uniqueness is in its breadth, its clarity of style, and especially its credibility, thanks to the meticulous methodology with which it is created, with ongoing internal critique, and a team of outstanding scholars," Rabbi Steinberg says

The chief editor is Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, and the others are Rav Meir Shmuelevitz and Rav Saar Meisel.

"We want the encyclopedia to be more interactive than it is now, and that is only possible through the Internet. The ideal is to have the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* on four levels," Rabbi Steinberg said.

"Level I of the online version will include entries that have not yet been written, that will be [in the] format of Wikipedia; everyone can contribute freely and our editors will moderate it. Level II will be the final versions of the entries which will be closed to editing by the public. They will, however, be able to add comments and quotes.

"Level III will be the *Talmudic Micropedia*, which will consist of condensed entries from the original, in a user-friendly style and format that will be targeted at the general population. The *Micropedia* [of which Rabbi Steinberg is the editor-in-chief] is being developed and written by different people, and it comes from a different budget. It will be extensive enough for readers who are seeking a first resource. It also includes added information, which had been previously omitted for some reason. Rav Goldberg reviews it all to be sure everything is accurate.

"At Level IV, hopefully, we'll be able to translate the *Micropedia* into different languages so it will be accessible to everyone."

"It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it," Rabbi Tarfon said (Avot 2:21) It is deeply inspiring to witness how a 72-year-old project, so greatly admired throughout the world of Jewish scholarship, is progressing rapidly so that current and future generations will be able to more easily immerse themselves in the treasures of the Torah. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 18, 2014

The politics of conversion

Process can be political and flawed, critics say

LILA SARICK
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Conversion has become the most contentious issue in modern Judaism. Both in Israel and in North America, tensions simmer over who can join the Jewish People, and what the standards are for admission.

While the majority of candidates convert to Judaism with few difficulties, the community's internal politics can trip up the unlucky. The most egregious reports of converts being mistreated surfaced recently in Washington D.C., where Rabbi Barry Freundel was charged with voyeurism after a hidden camera was found in his synagogue's mikvah. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Complaints about his treatment of converts, including demanding donations and requiring unpaid clerical work, which had been reported to the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) two years earlier, have also emerged.

Though the scandal has raised issues beyond conversion, it underscores the fact that potential converts can find themselves in a tenuous position, because they must rely on their sponsoring rabbi to help see them through the process of becoming a Jew.

Members of beit dins must walk a fine line between wanting to encourage converts and maintaining high standards. FLASH 90 PHOTO

"There is a vulnerability that exists between a spiritual guide and a congregant. And for the convert, the rabbi is also a gatekeeper," says Rabbi Adam Cutler, who oversees conversions at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation. "There's a real power piece. Rabbis are certainly aware of it."

The allegations concerning Rabbi Freundel are unprecedented, and rabbis are as dismayed by the unfolding story as their congregants. But in other ways, the conversion process can have potential pitfalls.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover, at Toronto's Beth Tikvah Synagogue, says he sees the fallout in his office. Some of the people he counsels are candidates who have spent time and money on unaffiliated rabbis who don't end up converting them. Others have had run-ins with a beit din that makes unreasonable demands. "I have felt for a while we could be doing more to protect them [converts]," Rabbi Grover says.

Rabbis, and particularly those who are members of beit dins (rabbinic courts), must walk a fine line between wanting to encourage converts and maintaining high standards. But in Toronto, critics claim the city's Vaad Harabonim, the only body that can perform Orthodox conversions, has veered too far from community norms.

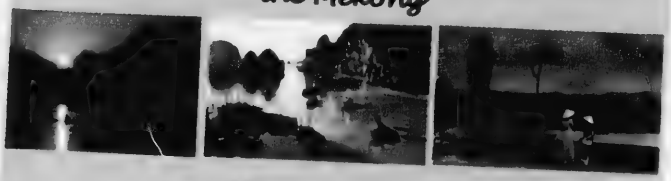
The Orthodox Vaad is far from transparent about the process, and its standards are "out of touch with reality," Rabbi Grover says. The Toronto Vaad has no website, an uneven record of replying to candidates and is not welcoming to converts, he adds.

One Toronto Orthodox rabbi, who did not want to be named, says he has seen a number of serious candidates who were discouraged by the beit din.

"Some of the requirements they make go well beyond what Halachah requires. They are reflective of the religious and cultural norms within a particular segment of Orthodoxy, but are not reflective of more modern Orthodoxy," he says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26
Beit din called out of touch

Vietnam, Cambodia & The Riches of the Mekong



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Why I became Jewish: converts tell their stories

LILA SARICK
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Converts' stories about their journey to join the Jewish People are as varied as the individuals themselves.

Whether the decision to change one's religion and by extension one's identity is triggered by the birth of a child or marriage to a Jewish partner or the result of individual exploration, it is not taken lightly. For many, it involves both heartache and a sense of homecoming.

Ashley, who is due to convert in Toronto this winter (and who declined to give her full name), studied a variety of religions before stumbling upon Judaism.

"I fell into discovering Judaism accidentally," she said. "The more I read about it, the more it made sense."

But when the 24-year-old told her family she was converting to Judaism, her formerly "not religious" parents began going to church and told her they were praying for her.

Raised in a community east of Toronto, she and her family didn't know any Jews. "I guess it's just foreign to them," she said. As she studied in conversion class, she experimented with how observant she was going to be. "That was alarming for them," she said.

The Jewish community, meanwhile, has been welcoming, she said. "I do get the question 'Who's the guy?' and when they hear there's no guy, they're very excited," she said. Still, she harbours some reservations that she won't ever be fully accepted as a Jew. She notes that on applications for Jewish schools and camps, the question of whether an applicant's mother is born Jewish is always required. "I do worry that if I have children, would they be discriminated against?"

Despite her concerns, choosing Judaism was the right decision, she says. "I felt like there was something missing always and now there isn't."

Russell Copeman, a Montreal city councillor and a former member of the Quebec National Assembly, began considering conversion when his first child was born to his Jewish wife, and he started to consider the implications of raising a child with two religions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26
Finding a home in Judaism

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In the heart of Bloor-Yorkville

Carlebach and Cosby: can we separate art and artist?

Asher Lovy

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach touched so many lives with his music and his apparent utter devotion to God and the Jewish People. He helped return souls to Judaism at a time when religion seemed on the decline. But there was another side to Rabbi Carlebach that forces us to ask the uncomfortable question: can we separate the man from the legacy, the art from the artist?

A few weeks ago, my synagogue held its annual Carlebach Shabbos. Some 1,500 people showed up to sing, dance and celebrate the legacy of Rabbi Carlebach. The room was filled with people from all walks of Jewish life – from the far-right to the far-left, observant and non-observant, all singing the same music, all united in a way they have rarely, if ever, been before. I found myself singing along with everyone else, my feet tapping to the melody, a smile tugging at the corners of my mouth. It was impossible not to be swept up.

And yet I felt a little dirty, because there is another side to the legend of Rabbi Carlebach, a much darker side. Allegations and accusations that he fondled women who came to him for guidance, that he masturbated on a women, and that he covered it all up by telling these women that they were holy and special, have been widely disseminated. I've even heard some of them first hand.

As I sat there, a battle was raging in my head: how could I listen – even participate – in the celebration of Rabbi Carlebach's art when I knew what he did to those women?

At that moment, I started thinking about the recent resurgence of rape allegations against Bill Cosby. I loved Cosby, loved his show, his comedy, his smile. I loved what he represented – just like I loved Rabbi Carlebach. Of all the people who had to be sexual abusers, it had to be Carlebach and Cosby.

They got away with what they did for so long because of how loved and cherished they were for their work. But can their work stand alone? Is it possible to separate the art from the artist?

> *They got away with what they did for so long because of how loved and cherished they were for their work.*

It's an ongoing question for me.

On the one hand, I see the beauty Rabbi Carlebach brought into the world, and I don't want the world to suffer the loss of that because of his sins. Perhaps the beauty and holiness he facilitated were there already, waiting only to be discovered and brought to light – maybe he was only a conduit. Perhaps the world might have been able to access that magic through someone else, someone less flawed. And maybe for that reason we should allow what he revealed to stand alone. Maybe there's a message, some truth, a little good that can be salvaged. And might the message not be valid regardless of its source? Can we not hang on to the love and acceptance exhorted by Rabbi Carlebach while distancing ourselves from the man himself and his actions, or keep the moral values Cosby preached while damning the damage he caused to 17 (and counting) women?

On the other hand, what if we do more harm than good by perpetuating the tools of these people's abuses? Perhaps we are contributing to the pain felt by both men's victims, who for so long were denied justice, by touting the instruments of their abuse as something worthy of praise and enjoyment. Maybe we render those men that much more acceptable by refusing to give up what they created.

There are countless answers to these questions. But frankly, I haven't found mine yet. It's something I struggle with every time I hear one of Rabbi Carlebach's songs or see Cosby's face. I find myself moved and repulsed at the same time. I don't know what the balance should be. I don't even know if there is one to be had. ■

Asher Lovy lives in New York and blogs at hareiani.com.

Putting Hebrew at the centre

Daniel Held

Hebrew is the gateway to Judaism. Hebrew opens doors to Jewish peoplehood – to relationships with Jews in Israel and around the world. In my travels through South America, Ukraine and Europe, Hebrew gave me access to Jewish communities I wouldn't have had otherwise.

Hebrew provides an entrance to meaningful tfillah. It affords us facility to understand traditional liturgy used for generations and reinvent our own, personal tfillot.

Hebrew is a gateway to the sea of Torah, Mishnah and centuries of rabbinic literature. Proficiency in Hebrew opens up the world of the classical rabbis, their debates, logic, stories and thinking.

Hebrew is an equalizer. It reverses roles of newcomer communities from Israel and the FSU, empowering them as teachers and guides.

And Hebrew is an entry point to a deeper relationship with Israel. Although it's easy to travel, see and know Israel in English, a deeper understanding of the people, politics, ideas, history and granular feel of Israel can only be achieved in Hebrew.

Hebrew proficiency across North America is dropping, with fewer young Jews able to understand and speak the language. This drop in proficiency closes the doors that Hebrew opens.

To some extent, this drop is because Hebrew education, which once took place in numerous settings of learning, has, by and large, been restricted to schooling.

Throughout middle and high school, I struggled with Hebrew. There were years where I'm sure I only passed because of the mercy of the teacher. The summer after Grade 11, however, I worked at a Jewish summer camp in Ukraine with Russian-, Hebrew- and English-speaking staff. By default, our common language was Hebrew – forcing me to live in the language I had struggled with. When I returned to school in September, my Hebrew was at a new level. After graduating high school, I studied in Israel. Again immersed in the language, my Hebrew grew to fluency.

Learning Hebrew in day and supplementary schools is important, but it does not suffice. It's time for us to create immersive Hebrew environments in early childhood centres, day and overnight camps, and other settings of non-formal learning. It's in these settings that there's the time and space to make Hebrew into a living language used throughout one's normal experiences – at wake-up and meals, during sports and study.

A number of summers ago, I was part of a team which studied the potential for Hebrew-immersion summer camps. In years gone by, many Jewish summer camps were immersive Hebrew environments. In recent decades, however, most lost their immersive zeal and ended up with a language of nouns - "We're going to the *chadar*."

Our team studied both Jewish camps that still do Hebrew and non-Jewish programs that create immersive environments in other languages. I saw camps where, after a month of living in a foreign language, campers were not only able to understand and converse in a new language, but were excited about their new knowledge and skills, and proud to use them.

As a result of the study, and with support from the Steinhardt Foundation and others, last summer, Centre Camp, a day camp in Toronto, launched a pilot Hebrew immersion section at the Schwartz/Reisman JCC, a program organizers hope to expand this summer and grow into the future. Two dozen campers – both Israelis and Canadians- lived their summer in Hebrew.

We need more Hebrew immersion programs. We need early childhood centres where toddlers live Hebrew, sports leagues where play and refereeing is in Hebrew, and residential summer camp where Hebrew is the language of swimming lessons and ropes courses.

Hebrew is a gateway to multiple forms of Jewish expression, but the only way to access it is to immerse yourself in it, living the language and opening doors through it. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Beware the perfect building called the past

Jean M. Gerber

Every year at Chanukah, we celebrate with latkes and songs. We consume a shocking amount of fried dough with jelly inside, all the while telling ourselves that this menu fits the holiday, with its emphasis on oil.

We may no longer believe the story of the miraculous oil, but there is always food, glorious food.

Like belief in the Tooth Fairy, this is fine for children. So are heartwarming stories, of which, over the years, I have read many at children's bedtimes (with, I admit, ill-concealed resentment, as the latke-machine Grannie wears a jolly apron, her hair in a bun, but I digress).

True, the Maccabean revolt put Israel on the map. Victory over Greek armies (albeit weakened by internal strife) restored a Jewish state. This allowed the rise of Pharisaic strength and the beginning of Rabbinic Judaism, using tools of Greek thought without the accompanying pagan praxis. True that as a model of resistance to assimilation, we acquired a vital perspective on identity and faith, one that outlasted the destruction in 70 CE and the dispersion.

The miracle of the oil? Good for the kids, but as adults, we must look beyond the miraculous to the real. What happened after the Temple was restored to its purity?

It wasn't so good. In fact, if we look at the history books, succeeding generations of the Hasmonean dynasty, rather than upholding the religious elements for which the war was fought, gradually transformed itself into a typical Hellenistic kingdom. Having usurped the high priesthood (for which they were not genealogically qualified) they anointed themselves kings (but not Davidic ones). They squabbled among themselves, made treaties with Greek rulers and then Rome, and were castigated by their erstwhile Pharisaic allies. One story has Alexander Yannai asking the Pharisee leadership what they wanted and basically being told, "We want you to die."

It took queen Shlomzion HaMalkah to smooth things over, and they were never the same.

Finally Rome devoured the Jewish state and put Herod on the throne. That's Herod the Idumean, whose people had been forcibly converted by the Hasmoneans when Idumea (Edom) was annexed during the wars.

Judah, Hammer of God, is ignored by the rabbis, who knew the history too well. They had seen the Hasmoneans become despots, rather than liberators. Rather, the rabbis gave great credit, in their midrashic world, to Judith, heroine of the apocrypha, as "part of the miracle." Intent on reframing the story to emphasize the miraculous, and also to include women in the mitzvah of lighting the candles, the rabbis moved away from history and into creative memory mode.

Lesson learned? Maybe not. Today *Maoz Tzur* may be sung as a rousing anthem, but as a message from history for the future, it is dangerous. Now Israel casts eyes on the occupied territories, with many hoping that somehow the whole area will become part of Israel – as it was for a time under the Hasmoneans. Those wishful thinkers seem to have read only the first chapter of the book. Or maybe their book only has one chapter.

If we use only part of the story, we construct a past that never really happened. We are like the protagonist in Alistair MacLeod's *No Great Mischief*, who "felt that if you read everything and put the pieces together, the real truth would emerge. It would be, somehow, like carpentry. Everything would fit together just so, and you would see in the end something like 'a perfect building called the past.'" Alas, there is no past perfect – except maybe in French. (But at least MacLeod's character had read "everything.")

For me, the lesson is that you have to be very careful about which historic event you base present policy on. Relying on children's tales and on a simplistic account – that perfect building called the past – can be very, very dangerous if used as fact upon which to build a nation. ■

Is Israel's proportional electoral system preventing peace?

Arie Raif

Since 1948, Israel has had 33 governments. Only three of them have completed the full four-year term in office, and Israel's proportional electoral system is the reason for that troubling record. It is imperative that the system be reformed, because the survival of Israel is at stake.

The Israeli system of government requires wide-ranging coalitions, often creating divisions and inhibiting progress. Israeli politicians must constantly monitor the status of coalitions cobbled together in the aftermath of each election. Sometimes the price paid to keep these improbable arrangements intact is billions of shekels used to buy the co-operation of coalition members.

As Israelis find themselves thrust into another election campaign, the very nature of Israeli politics raises an important question: Is the proportional electoral system preventing peace?

In Israel, each party creates ranked lists of Knesset aspirants. Once the votes are tallied, each party is allocated seats based on its performance in the popular vote. Members of the Knesset are not elected directly, and because of that some may feel they don't owe any obligation to the Israeli public. Their real loyalties are to their parties, and the real decision-makers are the *merkazei miflagot* (party centres) and *va'adot mesadrot* (organizing committees).

Meanwhile, coalition maintenance requires massive concessions and elaborate backroom dealings. Often, smaller parties find themselves wielding the balance of power, able to prop up a government or bring it crashing down. In particular, the religious parties – Zionist and non-Zionist alike – end up punching above their weight, and can wrangle support for their pet issues. As such, Israel's unresponsive electoral system holds crucial implications for the peace process and regional stability.

Case in point: In 1987, Israel was led by a coalition government formed in the wake of the election of 1984. Under the terms of the coalition deal, Shimon Peres would become prime minister and Yitzhak Shamir would assume the roles of deputy prime minister and foreign minister. After 25 months in office, Peres and Shamir would switch roles. (Issac Herzog and Tzipi Llvni, the leaders of Israel's Labor and Hatnua parties respectively, announced a similar agreement last week.)

In April 1987, Peres, who by now was foreign minister, and Jordan's King Hussein reached several agreements, which became known as the "London Accord." The deal recognized three entities: the State of Israel and Jordan, which were to remain as they were, and a new entity that was to include the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. Under the terms of this agreement, Israelis living in the territories could have held onto their Israeli passports and Jerusalem would have remained united, with each religion taking responsibility for its own holy sites.

It was the best peace deal Israel could have ever achieved and would have changed the face of the Middle East forever. But prime minister Shamir torpedoed the plan, arguing that it would not stand up to the test of time. Some have called this decision the biggest political mistake since the establishment of the State of Israel. If this is true, then the rotating arrangement between Peres and Shamir, and the proportional electoral system that fostered such a deal, are to blame.

Israel's electoral system resembles more a "market of hagglers," than a serious ideological arena. And in addition to endangering peace prospects, the system may very well impede high-quality Israelis from venturing into politics. Some conclude it's simply best to avoid the charade of wheeling and dealing. I've seen it first-hand.

Meanwhile, some voices for reform are arguing that Israelis should adopt a passive approach to change ahead of the next election. If the Knesset cannot, or will not, adopt electoral change, voters might have to take another approach and refuse to vote altogether. ■

Arie Raif is vice-chairman & CEO of the Canadian Peres Center For Peace. In 1974, he won the nomination of the Independent Liberal Party for the Israeli parliament.

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Claims Conference boosts funds for Canadian survivors

PAUL LUNGEN
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Eleven Canadian social service agencies that provide services to elderly victims of the Holocaust will see their allocations from the Claims Conference triple in 2015 compared to 2014.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, known more commonly as the Claims Conference, announced last week it will allocate $18.6 million (all figures US) to Canadian agencies, up from $6.4 million in 2014. Most of the funds are slated for home care, but they can also be used for medical care, food and transportation.

Keith Landy, left, and Claims Conference executive vice-president Greg Schneider at a 2012 meeting in Washington

Agencies in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver and in smaller Jewish centres, including Halifax and Windsor, are expected to benefit from the allocations.

Among the recipient agencies are Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, Toronto; Jewish Family & Child Service, Toronto; Jewish Family Service Agency, Vancouver; Jewish Family Services of Ottawa; Jewish Family Services, Edmonton; and the Cummings Centre, Montreal. The Cummings Centre administers funds to Jewish Child and Family Service, Winnipeg; Jewish Family Service Calgary; and the Windsor Jewish Federation, among other agencies in Canada.

A first-time direct allocation of $1.1 million will be made to Jewish Family Services of Edmonton.

"All Shoah victims should be able to receive the help and support that they need to live the rest of their lives in dignity, after having endured indescribable suffering in their youth," said Julius Berman, president of the Claims Conference.

"I think it's very encouraging," said Toronto lawyer Keith Landy, one of two Canadian representatives on the Claims Conference board.

"It's so important for the dignity of survivors as they reach their golden years," Landy said. "The money is not simply going to be left for posterity but will provide a meaningful assistance for survivors."

Holocaust survivor Sidney Zoltak, a member of the Claims Conference board of directors, said, "The substantial increase for needy Holocaust survivors for home care was obtained after [Claims Conference negotiators] explained to German government representatives that the elderly survivor, when he or she is moved from their home, experiences additional traumatic shock.

"I believe the additional funds that were made available to these survivors will enable them to experience a calmer and more comfortable life," Zoltak said.

Canadian agencies are expected to make their own pitch for funding, based on the number of survivors they reach as well as the services they provide, he said.

"Funding for 2015, to social service organizations working with survivors is based on the projected unmet needs that such organizations have reported to the Claim Conference," a Claims Conference statement said.

The Claims Conference estimates there are between 14,000 and 16,000 Holocaust survivors in Canada, though recent census data suggests the number is lower and dwindling, Landy said.

The allocation for home care includes a variety of services that allow Holocaust survivors to remain in their own homes. Home care services include light housekeeping, cooking and even help getting dressed and with hygiene.

The Claims Conference represents world Jewry in negotiations with European nations for compensation and restitution for the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, along with their heirs.

The increased allocations in 2015 resulted from negotiations with Germany, which has agreed to provide $1 billion to be allocated by the Claims Conference through 2017.

Sydney Zoltak

Total Claims Conference distributions in 2015 are expected to reach $365 million, a 21 per cent increase over 2014. Holocaust survivors in 47 countries will benefit from the allocation.

In addition to German government funding, the Claims Conference is funded through the proceeds from recovered Jewish properties in the former East Germany, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the government of Austria and from a settlement with Swiss banks.

The allocations announced last week are separate from compensation payments distributed to individual victims of the Holocaust. ■

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CUPW sues Wiesenthal CEO Benlolo and Sun Media for defamation

Postal union denies supporting terror and hate groups

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of Canada's largest unions is suing Sun Media Corp. and Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, for saying it supports terrorism.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is seeking $250,000 in damages for defamation from Sun Media's parent company, Quebecor Media Inc., alleging it was smeared in a *Sun News Network* segment last summer.

The July 24 segment, titled *Hamas, CUPW Flags Fly on Parliament Hill*, which featured host Jerry Agar and guest Benlolo, blasted CUPW members for taking part in a pro-Palestinian protest in Ottawa the day before.

The broadcast said CUPW banners were flown near Hamas flags, and pointed out that Hamas is a banned terrorist organization in Canada.

A statement of claim filed in Ottawa on behalf of the union said the broadcast made "many untrue, disparaging statements about CUPW and its members," including that CUPW has often "lent [its] support to terrorist organizations," and that it "has a history of partnering up with hate groups."

Agar and Benlolo "wrongfully state" that CUPW supports or partners with terrorist and hate groups, and Hamas in particular, the claim said.

None of the allegations have been tested in court.

The segment remains available on the *Sun News* website.

The filing said CUPW was also defamed in a later column Agar wrote in the *Toronto Sun* and its online edition, headlined "Hamas goes postal? Only in Canada." The column, the claim stated, also contains "many false, disparaging and defamatory statements about CUPW and its members," including that they support "the genocide of the Jewish People."

A statement of defence filed on behalf of Sun Media and Agar said the flag of Hamas was "prominently displayed" at the July 23 pro-Palestinian demonstration in Ottawa.

Avi Benlolo FILE PHOTO

Jerry Agar SUN MEDIA SCREEN SHOT

> *As postal workers, we stand by our actions in the face of propaganda efforts to silence and defame supporters of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement*

The statement noted that the Hamas charter calls for the "dissolution of Israel," and that the federal government designated it a terrorist organization in 2002.

It added that the flag or banner of CUPW was also "prominently displayed" at the protest, "in proximity to the flag of Hamas."

The statement also cited an email from CUPW in response to a request for comment from a *Sun News* producer.

As cited in the statement of defence, the email, from CUPW spokesperson Aalya Ahmad, said, "Working people have as much right as anybody to hold and express opinions on international issues. Our members support the human rights of the Palestinian people and want an end to the violence and killing.

"CUPW condemns the current position of the Harper government in attempting to justify the unjustifiable. By making excuses for Israel's actions, the Canadian government is promoting war against the Palestinian people. Our government should be promoting peace, not war. The only way to achieve a lasting peace is through justice."

The email, as quoted, went on to say: "Our position on Israel and Palestine is established by a democratic process of debate followed by a vote. As postal workers, we stand by our actions in the face of propaganda efforts to silence and defame supporters of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. It is simply the right thing to do."

The broadcast was "true" and constituted "fair comment," the defence filing stated. Alternatively, it added, the broadcast and Agar's column constituted "responsible communication concerning matters in the public interest." Sun Media "has a duty to report" on such matters.

Benlolo told *The CJN* he could not comment, as the matter is before the courts.

In an email to *The CJN*, Steven Cavanagh, Benlolo's lawyer, said his client is represented separately, "and that the statement of defence that has been delivered on behalf of the *Sun News* defendants does not apply to him. If it becomes necessary for him to file a defence to this claim, that will not occur until sometime in 2015." ■

Canada, Israel hold talks to update free trade pact

PAUL LUNGEN
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Two-way trade in merchandise between Canada and Israel stood at $1.2 billion as of the end of October 2014, but there's always room to do more.

With the goal of enhancing economic ties between the two nations, negotiators from both countries met in Jerusalem last week for the third round of talks to expand and modernize the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA).

CIFTA has been in place since 1997, but its terms have been eclipsed by developments in a number of fields, including e-commerce.

Negotiators from the two jurisdictions tackled a variety of other issues as well, such as access for goods, dispute resolution, defining the origin of goods, agricultural regulations, technical barriers for trade and intellectual property, said Max Moncaster, press secretary to Minister of International Trade Ed Fast.

Other areas being discussed that could result in side agreements are labour and environmental issues, he added.

"An expanded and modernized agreement will support Canadian businesses and investors, deepen trade and investment linkages and further strengthen Canada's bilateral relationship with Israel," said a news release from Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

"We're certainly committed to deepening our economic ties with Israel," Moncaster said. Canada is modernizing its free trade agreements with a number of countries, he added.

Israel's ambassador to Canada was likewise upbeat about an updated deal. "Israel cherishes its warm, deeply rooted relationship with Canada, in which bilateral trade and mutual economic interests play important roles," said Ambassador Rafael Barak.

"We are working side by side to take the CIFTA into the 21st century by making it more responsive to the new era of e-commerce.

"An upgraded agreement will not only strengthen our bilateral ties, but will also lead to more business opportunities and greater prosperity for both Canadians and Israelis," the ambassador added.

According to Moncaster, the $1.2 billion figure does not include trade in services and investment, but the 2014 data for these sectors was not available yet.

In 2013, two-way trade in services alone totalled $401 million. For merchandise, for which the 2014 data is available to the end of October, Canada imported far more from Israel than it exported. Its exports totalled $284 million, while imports came in slightly under $1 billion.

Canada's main exports were paper and paperboard, aircraft and parts, machinery and parts, electric machinery and electric parts and cereals.

Its main imports were pharmaceuticals, electric machinery and electronic equipment, precious stones and metals, machinery and parts.

Since CIFTA came into force in 1997, Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Israel has more than doubled, starting at $507 million in 1996.

In January 2014, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced new talks to expand and modernize CIFTA. The first round of negotiations took place in Israel in February and the second was held in Ottawa in May. ■

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Nazi's son discusses his path to Judaism

JODIE SHUPAC
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Bernd Wollschlaeger, the keynote speaker at the 10th annual Dinner of Miracles on Dec. 11, brought a hushed silence to the room of 300 people with his stark declaration that he is not the son of a Holocaust survivor but of a perpetrator.

The event, which took place at Petah Tikvah Congregation, is billed as "a special evening of dialogue between young adults and Holocaust survivors." It lets Jews in their 20s and 30s dine with survivors – more than 40 were in attendance, with at least one seated at each table – to better understand the horrors of the Holocaust by hearing their stories first-hand.

The evening culminated in Wollschlaeger's address, in which the German-born physician described growing up Catholic in postwar Germany, surrounded by mixed messages about the events of World War II.

Wollschlaeger's father, a proud Nazi and former German tank commander, told him glory stories from the war. Meanwhile, at school, the young Wollschlaeger started to learn about the Nazis' systematic massacre of the Jews.

"I grew up with the image of my dad as a hero," he said, "But the truth came out, in phases."

Wollschlaeger finally drew the truth about the Holocaust out of his father and, horrified and guilt-ridden, sought out his hometown's local Jewish community – which consisted of about 30 Holocaust survivors.

One man asked Wollschlaeger to be his "Shabbos goy," and he spent the next several years forming close bonds with members of the community. He was eventually kicked out of his parents' home and made his way to Frankfurt, where he began to study Judaism under the tutelage of a rabbi.

In 1986, Wollschlaeger converted to Judaism and moved to Israel, despite, he said, having "no money or family there."

He worked on a kibbutz, was drafted into the military and married a Jewish-American woman, all the while swearing to himself he'd never "speak about being the son of a Nazi."

Wollschlaeger harboured the secret until roughly a decade ago, when his son Tal, now 25, asked him why he never spoke of *his* father. He mustered up the courage to tell Tal the truth, to which, he said, his son responded, "Cool story! I'm going to tell my friends."

This led to Wollschlaeger being invited to his son's school to publicly share his story for the first time, an experience he found extremely powerful.

Bernd Wollschlaeger delivered the keynote speech at the 10th annual Dinner of Miracles Dec. 11.

"It returned to me the core value of why I did what I did," Wollschlaeger said.

Now living in Florida, Wollschlaeger has been openly discussing his family history ever since.

Accompanied by his son, he recently visited Germany for the first time in 20 years, to visit his parents' graves.

"I looked at the graves and I told my son, 'You can never escape history, even in death. It always casts a shadow. But you can learn lessons from what happened and go forward. You can learn to translate this into a better life."

Wollschlaeger learned from his father, he explained, where hatred comes from, and that it's not "an evil force that comes from the sky, but from inside us… Hateful thoughts can become hateful deeds, and deeds can habits and social norms. This can lead to an entire people turning away when they witness unspeakable acts."

Wollschlaeger concluded by stressing to the audience the importance of challenging hate, fear and prejudice in whatever form it emerges, and whomever it targets.

"The lesson," he emphasized, "is to speak up, have courage and understand that, against all odds, change is possible." ■

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Christian woman donates European menorah to shul

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

When a newly built synagogue opened recently in the Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven, it was cause for celebration among the area's Jewish community.

For months, the neighbours had been watching the construction on a quiet street called Lamplighters Drive as the portables being used for the Ottawa Centre Chabad made way for a beautiful new building.

Finally, just before Rosh Hashanah, the grand opening took place and everyone was invited to take a look around. Not only the Jewish neighbours were looking forward to the event, though. For one family, completion of the building signalled the completion of a story that had been passed down for several generations.

Susan Bloomfield had been watching with interest from her home across the street as the synagogue took shape. Although she and her family are not Jewish, they owned a menorah that had been in the family since just after World War II.

Her late grandfather, Bernard Richel, had immigrated to Canada from Holland. During the war, said Bloomfield, her great-uncles had fought in the resistance and one of them, Gerhard Richel, had saved the lives of a Jewish family.

"My great-uncle and his wife had a sickly son. In his room was the door to the attic. They let the Jewish family hide in the attic and when the Germans came the family asked them not to disturb their sick son. The Germans were skeptical and even sent one of their doctors to check him out to confirm that he was ill. He actually ended up dying shortly after the war," said Bloomfield.

"In my Christian faith, I think God had a hand in it… the family was in the attic at least two years. At the end of the war, they were able to come out. I don't know their names or where they went. They left their menorah as a thank you. They had nothing else to give, but they were so grateful."

Bloomfield became the owner of the menorah when she got married. Her grandfather had brought it to Canada after attending his brother's funeral in Holland. He, in turn, left it to his daughter (Bloomfield's mother) who in turn passed it on to her daughter. Bloomfield's sons wanted her to keep it in the family but when she looked out at the synagogue she felt that the time was right for the menorah to go "home." So she took a picture of it and wrote out the story for her children.

Susan Bloomfield presents the menorah to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Blum.

"I sent an email to Rabbi [Menachem Mendel] Blum and offered the menorah, if anyone wanted it," she said.

The spiritual leader of Ottawa Centre Chabad accepted with gratitude, and at a special ceremony attended by the children of the shul's Hebrew school and their families, Bloomfield told her family's story and presented the menorah to Rabbi Blum.

"This menorah is a tangible symbol of Jewish survival even through the harshest time in Jewish history," said Rabbi Blum.

"It allowed a Jewish family to keep their faith during the war and they used it to express their gratitude for their survival. We are honoured that our new shul is the new home for this special menorah. It will inspire our children and grandchildren and we will cherish it and light it for many years to come." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 18, 2014

New Polish museum of Jewish life called 'stunning'

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Add to your bucket list a trip to Warsaw to see POLIN: The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which is already being hailed as a world-class facility just weeks after it opened.

"I think it is a stunning museum. It has a fair chance of being one of the great museums of the world," enthused University of Toronto historian Michael Marrus at a panel last week at U of T's Wolfond Centre, presented by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada.

What makes the museum so compelling is that "it is built on scholarship," Marrus added.

After eight years of construction, the completed museum has become a striking addition to the Polish capital's cityscape, said Peter Jassem, head of the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada's Toronto chapter and chair of the museum's Canadian committee.

On Oct. 28, the museum's core exhibit was opened by the presidents of Poland and Israel. Comprised of eight galleries set on 47,000 square feet, the exhibits "put you in the moment of time," said Jassem, who presented a slide show of the museum's interior and exterior.

The centrepiece of the museum, Jassem pointed out, is a meticulously reconstructed ceiling of a destroyed 17th-century wooden synagogue that once stood in the town of Gwozdziec.

Jews have lived in Poland for 1,000 years, and by the eve of World War II, they made up over a third of the population of many urban centres in the country, including the capital, he noted. Half of all Jews who perished in the Holocaust were from Poland, and 90 per cent of Polish Jewry was wiped out.

What makes the exhibits unique, Jassem explained, is that they present Polish history as a continuous, thousand-year story. Unlike other countries, Poland never banned or expelled Jews.

POLIN: The museum of the History of Polish Jews is being praised by many.

The Polish government invested $80 million in the museum, and an additional $50 million came from private funds, including from many Canadians.

Among the dignitaries who attended the opening was Canadian Sen. Linda Frum. "This new museum is not a museum to commemorate how Jews died in Poland. It is a museum to celebrate how they lived and, indeed, how they often thrived," Frum told the Senate on Nov. 4.

"For my part, as a Jew of Polish heritage, married to the son of Holocaust survivors, participating in the opening of this museum was a truly emotional experience."

Another Canadian connection came in 2006, when Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a Toronto-born museum scholar, was appointed as head curator.

> *It has a fair chance of being one of the great museums of the world.*
>
> **Michael Marrus**
> UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The museum, which has won global acclaim for its design and architecture, stands in the heart of the former Warsaw Ghetto.

"With its tent flap-like entry and façade of copper, glass and sand-coloured concrete, the building, glimmering like a mirage against its drab Warsaw backdrop, appears to look both back and forward in time," noted the *New York Review of Books* this month.

Toronto historian Frank Bialystok, who was born in Poland in 1946, agreed the museum "has been done with class and nuance" and provides "a profound sense of the integration of Poles and Jews throughout history."

Panelists, who included Eli Rubenstein, national director of the March of the Living and founder of the March of Remembrance and Hope, and Polish-Canadian historian Piotr Wrobel, concurred that the museum does not shy away from presenting Poland's anti-Semitic past, and offers a full, rich tapestry of all aspects of Jewish life in the country.

There are 7,500 Jews in Poland, according to the 2011 census. One study has claimed that up to 25,000 Polish citizens today are believed to be of at least partial Jewish heritage.

Some say Poland – site during the German occupation of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibor camps where millions of Jews were killed – is now more welcoming to Jews than many western European countries.

"When you take into account that Jews are being beaten up in the streets in Germany or France or Scandinavia – you even have synagogues being burned down, murders – we don't have any of that," Piotr Kadlcik, vice-president of the Jewish community of Warsaw, told the *Reuters* news agency in October.

"I think that right now it's safer to walk around Warsaw in a yarmulke than it is in certain neighbourhoods in Paris." ■

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Oral health program for Holocaust survivors launching

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Avi Wurman

Twenty-five per cent of Holocaust survivors in the United States live below the poverty line, a statistic that Avi Wurman, the Toronto-based president of the Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity (AO), maintained is "totally shocking."

"The typical number for the equivalent age group is nine per cent," he said.

This data, which came out of a January 2014 study commissioned by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden to ascertain Holocaust survivors' needs, led the White House to enlist its first-ever special envoy for Holocaust survivor services.

This, in turn, Wurman explained, led to the co-ordination of a three-year oral health pilot program that is being launched this January in nine North American cities, including Toronto and Montreal.

"Through the Biden-commissioned report," Wurman said, "it was found that many of these survivors are desperate for oral care, things like dentures or partial dentures, in order to function, to feel good about themselves, or to eat. A lot of survivors lost their teeth because of malnutrition during the Holocaust… And even if they didn't, many still need care in terms of fillings or basic dental work."

Henry Schein Cares (HSC) Foundation, an organization that delivers accessible health care and other services to underserved populations and is associated with global dental and medical supply company Henry Schein, has partnered with Alpha Omega, the oldest international dental organization and oldest international Jewish medical association, founded in 1907, to roll out The AO/HSC Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program.

The program will serve cities where Alpha Omega chapters exist and a need has been identified – seven in the United States and two in Canada – and will have dental professionals who are Alpha Omega members volunteer to provide dental treatment for about 250 to 300 Holocaust survivors each year, at no charge.

Although an equivalent study on survivor needs has not been conducted in Canada, Wurman said he'd learned from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto that about 2,500 Holocaust survivors in Toronto have been identified as living below the poverty line.

In Montreal, he said, the need for subsidized health care among Holocaust survivors is also great, especially since the Claims Conference, the international organization that helps Holocaust survivors get reparations from the German government, has, in recent years, expanded its criteria for what constitutes a survivor.

"They decided survivors shouldn't just be defined as people who lived in concentration camps or ghettos," Wurman said, "but anyone who had to flee Nazi persecution… Montreal has a Sephardi community of Holocaust survivors that were never previously defined as such – so now, the need there has been expanded."

In each participating city, patients will be referred by the local social service agencies affiliated with the Jewish community, who will determine an individual's eligibility for the oral health program based on financial and health needs.

Wurman explained that each city will have an "ambassador" who will liaise between the referring agencies and the volunteering Alpha Omega dentists.

"The Toronto ambassador has already recruited 40 or 50 names of dentists who have volunteered to give care," he said.

Volunteers include general dentists and specialists including periodontists and endodontists.

On Dec. 18, representatives from The AO/HSC Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program will present the logistics of the program at the White House.

Funding for the project has so far come mostly from private family foundations in the United States, but Wurman stressed that the program is also looking for large donors in Canada.

"Any foundation that is interested in helping Holocaust survivors – a group that deserves help more than any other group I know of – we'd be happy to have them step up," he said. ■

Academics debate Jewish nation-state bill

JODIE SHUPAC
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Yoram Hazony

Mira Sucharov

About 300 listeners tuned in Dec. 10 to hear academics Yoram Hazony and Mira Sucharov square off in an impassioned debate about Israel's proposed Jewish nation-state law.

The webinar was hosted by Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal (JFC-UIA) and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and moderated by CIJA's deputy director of communications and advocacy training, Jordan Kerbel.

The purpose of the debate was, Kerbel explained, to "strengthen understanding" of the controversial bill and promote "healthy debate… in order to have a vibrant, open-minded and inclusive Jewish community."

Hazony, an Israeli philosopher, writer, political theorist and president of the Jerusalem-based research and training centre the Herzl Institute, argued in favour of the Jewish nation-state, while Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, a blogger for *Ha'aretz* and the *Forward* and a regular columnist in the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* and Vancouver's *Jewish Independent*, argued against it.

Hazony began by claiming that the nation-state law would enshrine certain legislative protections for Jews that were considered essential at the time of Israel's founding, such as a military that "protects Jews all over the world whenever they are threatened or in danger," a law that gives Jews automatic citizenship, and an educational system that serves Jewish interests.

In the Diaspora, particularly in North America, he said, "You have to be quite wealthy to afford a Jewish education. The State of Israel was created in order to be able to educate a Jewish child for free."

Hazony said it's "painful" to hear critics of the nation-state bill express concern that it's racist, arguing that when Israel was first founded, "the idea of self-determination for nations – especially for persecuted nations – was considered a liberal, progressive cause."

He compared Israel to countries in Europe. "We see a continent filled with independent nations, each of whom expresses themselves according to their own independence and national character… Israel, as the only democratic nation in the Middle East, is just like the democracies in Europe and around the world."

Sucharov framed her argument by outlining aspects of the Israeli political and social arena that she maintains are "broken" and focused on how the nation-state bill would further erode them.

She raised the issues of Arab-Jewish relations, asylum-seekers to Israel, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the occupation of the West Bank, secular-religious tensions among Jews, Israel's "troubled standing" internationally, and bills in the Knesset that "verge on non-liberal expression" such as "attempts to criminalize anti-settlement boycotts."

"For all of these issues, this bill will hurt and not help Israel," Sucharov said.

She added that the bill would "symbolically underscore Arab Israelis' sense of second-class citizenry and further inflame morale" and argued it would cause them to vote in fewer numbers. Their sense of disenfranchisement could, she maintained, lead to "extra-governmental ways of expressing themselves."

The bill could also serve as "a measure of bad faith" in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

After 47 years of occupation, ongoing settlement building, confiscation of Palestinian land and "collective punishment [of Palestinians]," Sucharov argued, passage of the bill could lead to "a type of national xenophobia that would increase the polarization between Israel's national desires and its view of whether the Palestinians deserve their own state."

To end the debate, Hazony and Sucharov sparred over whether the nation-state bill would diminish Israel's democratic character: Hazony argued that, for a democracy to exist, equality must be balanced with security, liberty and a country's "control of its population."

"Jewish values are such that the overwhelming majority of Jews want to have a society where all people are free to worship and have a good life." He added: "We need to do certain things to protect our country. This won't lead to a fascistic or theocratic country."

Sucharov countered, "There's no such thing as a little bit equal. Either [minorities in Israel] will be granted full rights or not. Israel can claim its lack of equality is for security, but this is a slippery slope when it comes to the democratic state." ■

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Manipulated media images a threat to the West: prof

CYNTHIA GASNER
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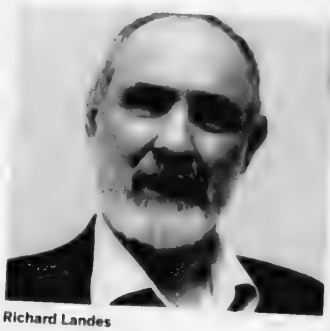

Richard Landes

The intimidation of the news media by Hamas in Gaza and manipulated images of casualties in the Palestinians' war against Israel are part of a larger radical Islamic threat to western democratic values, says an expert in the field.

Richard Landes, an associate professor of medieval history at Boston University, was in Toronto recently to deliver a keynote address titled "The Media as a Theatre of Conflict between Democratic Societies and Islamism," at a Canadian Institute for Jewish Research conference on media bias against Israel.

Landes, who received a PhD from Princeton University, directed the Centre for Millennial Studies at Boston University from 1999 to 2003.

Landes was the person who coined the term "Pallywood" for what he considers the practice of "stage filming of evidence against Israel for the benefit of the Palestinians." As he told *The CJN*, "Everyone on the inside knows that cameramen stage stuff... But the media won't admit it when confronted with the staging."

He cited an example: when a French journalist viewed footage taken by a Palestinian cameraman who recorded the alleged fatal shooting of Muhammad al-Dura by Israeli soldiers in 2000, he noted it was full of staged scenes. But he was told by the chief of news at the France 2 public television network, "Oh, monsieur, you know it is always like that. You may know that, but the public doesn't."

This staged scene, said Landes, "illustrates the public secret: everyone knows they fake stuff, but no one will admit it."

Another case during last summer's war in Gaza involved a claim that snipers targeted and killed a boy. It was illustrated with clearly staged footage, he said.

Additionally, he said, journalists often reported from Gaza that "the vast majority of casualties are civilians," without noting Palestinian incitement to genocidal hatred, or Hamas' firing of rockets from areas where civilians live and killing its own people. They also failed to mention that Israel is defending itself, trying hard to avoid civilian casualties, and sacrificing its own soldiers' lives to protect Palestinian civilians.

Landes attributes this to "pervasive and unacknowledged Hamas intimidation" that affects not only journalists on the ground but editors back home, a phenomenon that hasn't received enough attention.

Landes, who has published numerous articles and recently published two books, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford University Press) and *The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York University Press), believes this kind of dishonesty and unprofessional work by journalists doesn't hurt only Israelis and Palestinians.

"It hurts the West and democracies around the world. They don't understand that the conflict is jihad against democracy, [not] a national liberation movement against an imperialist colonialist invader, and they fan the flames [by] showing pictures of children killed by cruel Israelis when really they're sometimes killed by jihadist rockets that fall short. This arouses the desire for revenge not only against Israel but all 'infidels,' especially any who support Israel."

The challenge of Islamism, he said, is the great challenge of the 21st century, and young people in the West aren't paying attention to it because they have grown up in a bubble.

"Unless our youth can understand the stakes and defend the principles of democracy and free speech, rather than cede the public sphere to fanatics who have no respect for those principles, such as Islamists and the radical leftists who allied with them, there will be no democracy for a long time," Landes warned.

"This is not something they can leave to others."

The net result is that news consumers in democratic societies – whose news media send reporters to foreign lands in order to better understand the world – end up misinformed.

"No one wants to be the first person to say the emperor is naked, and no one wants to be the last. Our job is to start the stampede." ■

GUEST VOICE

Jewish students mobilize against anti-Israel motions

Jonathan Mamane, Hanna Sonigo, Jeff Bicher and Ariel Shapiro

When push comes to shove, students respond. Just when we think that campuses are losing their Jewish activists, we are pleasantly surprised. The leadership, passion and mobilization of Jewish, pro-Israel and pro-campus unity students on campuses in Montreal of late has been inspiring.

Recently, an anti-Israel motion was put forward at the Students' Society of McGill University's (SSMU) general assembly. After a long debate, McGill students voted to table the motion indefinitely, and thus no anti-Israel resolution was passed. After the tabling of this motion, pro-Israel students called on the SSMU to bring parties together to talk about the conflict. We are hoping that they will convene interested students next semester.

A month later, the Vanier College Students' Association held its own assembly. At first, a mostly one-sided resolution was to be presented. Thanks to the efforts of students and campus partners, the original motion was amended. What was intended to be a hostile motion against Israel became a motion for Vanier students to stand in solidarity with all victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling on all sides to exercise restraint. This motion passed.

Most recently, during Concordia Student Union's (CSU) byelections, a referendum question was posed, asking students if the CSU should join the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Byelections at Concordia get very low voter turnout, but for this referendum, after intense mobilization by all parties, more than 2,500 students exercised their right to vote.

While the motion passed, it is worthwhile to highlight that more than 50 per cent of the voters did not support the BDS motion, as the votes against plus the abstentions added up to more than half the votes cast. This proves what the "NO to BDS" campaign had been saying all along – this motion is divisive and should not be supported by the CSU or its students.

The Concordia administration rightly and unequivocally said "no" to academic boycotts. In a statement released by university president Alan Shepard after the results were released, this sentiment was undeniable. Boycotts stifle academic freedom and have no place at quality institutions.

The university's board of governors, at its Dec. 10 meeting, supported Shepard's statement. Holding this referendum question was futile, as it will have no influence on the direction of the university. It did manage to do two things, though: divide the campus and frustrate some alumni and other stakeholder groups.

To the many readers who have taken issue with the leadership on our campuses, we say thank you for your concern but the sky is not falling. After speaking with the many concerned professionals on our campuses, it was clear that our schools will continue to have strong relationships with Israelis and Israeli institutions.

We thank Concordia, McGill and Vanier for their support and their commitment to our community on and off campus. It was truly refreshing to see that at all of our schools, the senior professionals with whom we worked were just as concerned about campus unity as we were. It is pretty obvious that the leadership of our schools feel the same way we feel.

This was not solely a Jewish issue. This was not solely an Israel issue. This was, respectively, a McGill, Vanier and Concordia issue. We were frustrated with student groups on campus who seem to think that passing a hostile motion against Israel is the ideal segue to dialogue. We feel that passing such motions in advance of discussions seems to make the discussions pointless. None of us are interested in singling out one country or one people to demonize. As universalists, we are intent on breaking down barriers between us, and the only way to get there is through mutually respectful conversations. ■

Jonathan Mamane is co-president of Hillel Concordia. Hanna Sonigo is president of Hillel Vanier. Jeff Bicher is executive director and CEO of Hillel Montreal. Ariel Shapiro is co-president of Hillel McGill.

Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak

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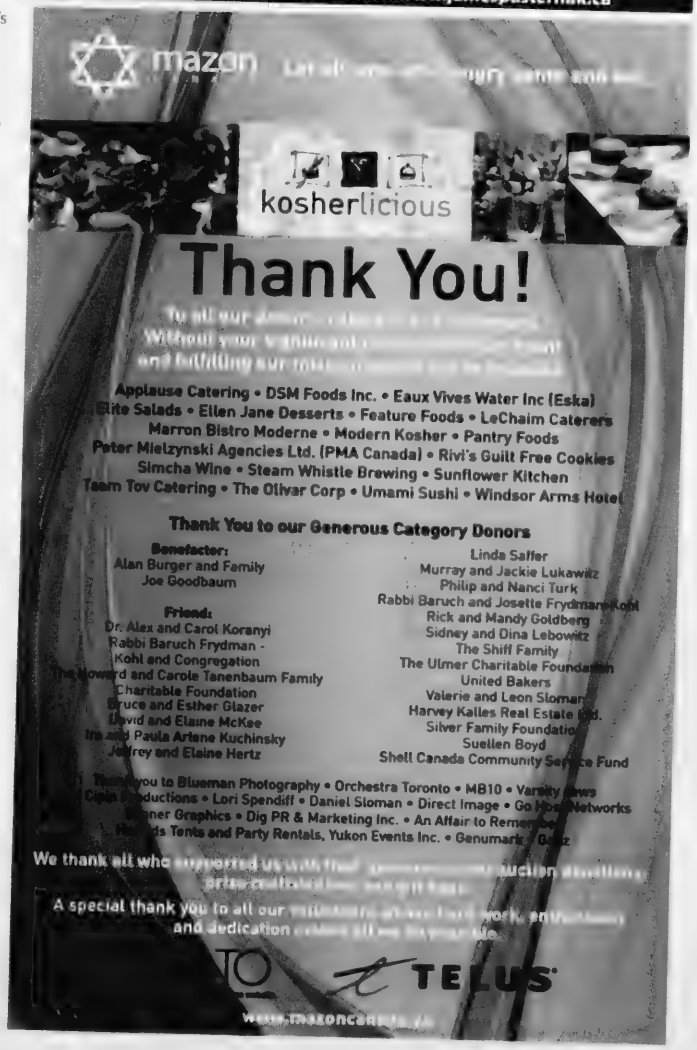
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Thank you for honouring me and may we have other opportunities to celebrate happy occasions together.

Warmest regards
Sandy Keshen

Reena

New rabbinic court vows to help agunot receive religious divorces

LILA SARICK
STAFF REPORTER

A newly formed rabbinic court aims to dramatically reduce "the scourge" of women who can't receive a religious divorce decree, known as a *get*, by taking an "aggressive" and "transparent" halachic approach, a Toronto conference heard this past weekend.

Rabbi Simcha Strauss, head of the newly formed International Beit Din, which meets in New York, says the court will break new ground in solving the long-unresolved problem of agunot, literally chained women. Under Jewish law, only men can grant a divorce and in uncounted cases, women are left in limbo, unable to divorce and to remarry.

"I consider agunot a tragedy, not only for the Jewish People, it's a tragedy for Halachah. It's a stain on Halachah. It comes to say Halachah can not solve its problems," Rabbi Strauss told the annual Renewing Our Spirit conference, hosted Dec. 14 by Torah in Motion at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. "I believe Halachah can solve its problems."

"Our job is to try to eradicate the scourge of agunot. We're going to be aggressive and we're going to be transparent," Rabbi Strauss said in an interview with *The CJN*.

"We'll use any halachically justifiable mode to free women."

The beit din, which has so far heard a handful of cases, is innovative in many ways. For instance, it will, for the first time for a beit din, be publishing its decisions on the Internet, in English, outlining the rationale for granting a divorce. Only the couple's names will be blocked.

A committee of female health professionals, chiefly psychologists and social workers, has also agreed to accompany a woman through the court proceedings. The beit din can be an intimidating process, with three men asking a woman about the most intimate details of her marriage in order to render a decision, Rabbi Strauss said. This way, at least the woman does not stand alone.

The court's decisions will rely on existing Jewish law and legal concepts. Government documents, such as tax returns, will be examined and witnesses will be interviewed, by Skype, if necessary. A recalcitrant husband will be summoned by the court three times, but if he does not comply, a *get* can still be issued, Rabbi Krauss explained.

Rabbi Simcha Krauss LILA SARICK PHOTO

> *Our job is to try to eradicate the scourge of agunot. We're going to be aggressive and we're going to be transparent*

In many cases, the husband uses extortion, to force a woman to pay for her *get*. Rabbi Krauss believes the court will be able to remedy many of those situations within the existing framework of Jewish law. "I think there are good solutions. If everyone would work on the solutions we have now, we would have many fewer agunot."

The court, which has heard just a handful of cases so far, has already had inquiries from women in Canada and Europe, as well as the United States.

The ultimate test for the court is whether its decisions will be accepted by the Israeli rabbinate and American rabbis.

Rabbi Krauss is optimistic the decisions will hold up. Before the first rulings are published, he will seek support from well-regarded rabbis in Israel.

"I don't think the world of Halachah will say 'no' unanimously," Rabbi Krauss said. If rabbis are rational and take the time to read the decisions, he believes they will support the court.

Rabbi Krauss, who served as a pulpit rabbi in New York for more than 20 years and as head of the Religious Zionists of America before making aliyah in 2005, was always aware of the problem agunot faced.

But in Israel, where agunah cases make the front page of the newspaper, he says it became evident to him that a solution needed to be found.

Agunot activists are also watching the new court closely in the hope it makes headway in resolving what has been an intractable problem, said Norma Joseph, a professor of religion at Concordia University and vice-president and consultant for the Canadian Coalition of Jewish Women for the Get.

Rabbi Krauss has credibility and is "not easily dismissed," she said.

"A lot will happen depending on what kind of decisions are written up and how those decisions are received by the rabbinate in Israel and the Beit Din of America," she said.

She worries, however, that Canadian women could face a stigma for travelling to the new beit din, instead of going to their local beit din, which may be less accommodating.

There is a school of thought that says Jewish law itself needs to change to "find a mechanism to make the law more open to women's participation in the process," rather than rely on the good intentions of a particular beit din, she said. However, the new beit din with its commitment to transparency and a willingness to help women is a promising start.

"It's exciting to think about, after so much difficulty. There is attention to women in this dire circumstance and someone is stepping forward. How that will work out is still to be developed." ■

GUEST VOICE

Our traditions link the past and the future

Sima Goel

This year, Chanukah carries extra meaning for me because it coincides with the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, a day of significance for Iranian Jews and Zoroastrians.

In Iran, the celebration of the winter solstice has been incorporated as a general holiday, even though the Zoroastrian religion has long been outlawed as a pagan form of worship. For Iranian Jews in general, and for my Iranian paternal grandfather in particular, the winter solstice was an exciting time, announcing the impending arrival of spring.

During the Festival of Lights, my grandfather, Baba Eshgel, would light a separate candle for each of his children and grandchildren, whether they were physically present or not. Baba had 12 children, and each of them had several of their own. Many of his children and grandchildren remained in Iran, while others had travelled far afield, to Israel, America and elsewhere. No matter where his children were, Baba Eshgel lit a candle for each: 60 new candles for each night.

As he lit each candle, he held the hand of one of his grandchildren. I remember the way his hand felt when it covered mine. I felt safe when I was beside him. When he held my hand as he lit the wick of my candle on the table, I knew the flame would never hurt me.

Chanukah often coincided with the winter solstice, and to celebrate that day, it was customary in Iran to eat watermelon. In Shiraz, it was impossible to find watermelons, except in season, but Baba Esghel always had one saved from late summer, which he kept in the cold storage room. He had been raised to believe that if you ate watermelon on that night, you would not become sick during the winter. Nothing has ever matched the sweetness of the slice of watermelon my grandfather shared with me.

Baba Esghel died of a broken heart in 1981, three months after Hezbollah executed my aunt, his daughter. The following year, I escaped the country of my birth, beginning a long journey that would eventually bring me to another country and a new destiny. As I crossed the desert in the company of smugglers, I promised myself I would forever remember the life I had known in Shiraz – both the sweetness and the sour.

What I have learned over the years is that tradition is passed down through example, not words. Words are like smoke: they stain the air and then disappear. But actions and traditions engrave themselves in our minds and live in our memories. Just like my dear Baba Eshgel.

Life in Iran was complicated for me, a Jewish girl with a desire for a different life, one where I could speak my mind and read whatever I pleased. When I reached adolescence, my lively nature led me to speak my mind, and I could not find a way to filter my thoughts. This eventually led me to leave my beautiful and beloved family and homeland.

We build and renew ourselves through our traditions. Our stories are all meaningful, and they live on through our traditions. Sweet, bitter, tear-stained, joyful – our traditions celebrate our religion and underline our identity, as a people, as a nation and as individuals. Together, we are a precious, unique tapestry, where each of us offers a story, a history, a colour. Each of us is a line that leads to the past and each of us is a stitch that holds the cloth together.

As you light your candles for the eight precious nights and sing your songs and enfold the hands of those you hold dear, remember that you, too, are a light, shining in the darkness of history, illuminating the future: you, your children, your grandchildren and your grandchildren yet to be. ■

Sima Goel is the author of Fleeing the Hijab: A Jewish Woman's Escape from Iran, *General Store Publishing House.*

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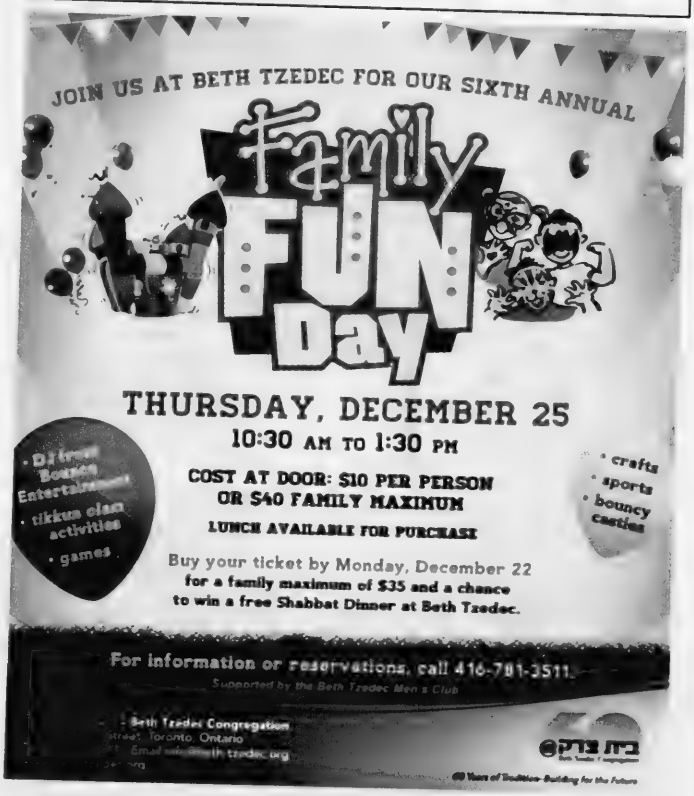
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 18, 2014

Beit din called out of touch

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

For instance, one potential convert, who was already observing Shabbat and kashrut, was told she could never shake hands with a man, which would pose a problem for her in the business world where she worked. The demand was the final straw, and she ended up not pursuing conversion.

After a number of such incidents, the rabbi decided to stop sponsoring conversion candidates to the Toronto beit din and now suggests that they travel to a religious court in another city.

By comparison, Montreal has two rabbinic courts that perform Orthodox conversions. Both groups, one modern Orthodox, the other haredi, have websites and publish codes of conduct outlining exactly what is required of candidates. Both beit dins in Montreal offer formal classes.

Leah (not her real name) learned first hand of the difficulties dealing with Toronto's Orthodox beit din when she converted a few years ago.

She had converted through the Conservative movement when she was in her early 20s, shortly before she was married. Two decades later, she and her husband were attracted to an Orthodox shul, but they could not join and hold their son's bar mitzvah there until she completed an Orthodox conversion. Although the family was living a committed Jewish life – the kids were in day school, their home was kosher – she found it to be a gruelling process.

The lowest point in her conversion journey was when the beit din told her to change one of her children's Hebrew names to a more biblical one. "They didn't like the Hebrew name we chose," she says.

But the biggest obstacle was the beit din's attitude. "They were disrespectful of my time." Meetings were cancelled, and "quite often it was on the spur of the moment."

With three young children, a job and elderly parents living out of town, time was her most precious commodity.

Not only did she feel vulnerable, she felt the reputation and credibility of her sponsoring rabbi and his wife, who was her teacher, were also riding on the conversion.

"I considered going to Buffalo. I didn't want to deal with the politics of the Toronto board," she says.

Rabbi Asher Vale, director of Toronto's Orthodox beit din denies that the body is out of touch with communal standards.

"In Toronto, most of the rabbinate is haredi. We accept people if they come from a modern Orthodox shul or from a haredi shul," he says. "Our main thing is whether the person is going to make a commitment to Halachah. If they're part of a community and have a sponsoring rabbi, we feel comfortable with that."

For example, the beit din would not tell a convert that a knitted kippah was unacceptable, or that they could only wear white shirts, he says. Questions such as whether women are permitted to wear pants or must cover their hair would need to be addressed by the sponsoring rabbi, he says.

The beit din sends prospective candidates a description of the process and what it entails, and tries to give people an approximate timeline of when they will be ready for conversion, he says.

In response to the Freundel allegations, the RCA has said that every beit din under its auspices (which includes Toronto's Vaad and one of the beit dins in Montreal) "will appoint" an ombudswoman to handle female converts' concerns about the process.

In Montreal, where the position will be added, the ombudswoman can "go over our heads to the national office," says Rabbi Michael Whitman, head of the beit din. Converts "can give feedback that will not affect the conversion process."

Toronto has yet to discuss the issue, Rabbi Vale says. "We haven't had any major issues," he adds. "Every person has a sponsoring rabbi. If an issue comes up, we are in touch with them."

Rabbinic spokespersons for the Conservative and Reform movements say that an ombudsman is not necessary, because their process is quite different. Candidates are taught during a year-long course by a variety of rabbis and are free to switch from one sponsoring rabbi to another if a there is a bad fit.

Sometimes a mismatch occurs not because of personality, but because of ideology. While Rabbi Grover says he steers many of his candidates toward the course run by the Rabbinic Assembly, the governing body for the Conservative movement, sometimes candidates are unsure of the level of commitment they will adopt. For them, he recommends a new course offered by a group of rabbis with a variety of affiliations.

"In the RA [classes], people feel like they cannot be honest. We put so much pressure to be up to a high standard, so they fake it," he says.

The alternative class lets candidates discover where they are on the Jewish spectrum before making a commitment to a sponsoring rabbi or denomination, instead of deciding at the outset of the program.

As conversion loses its stigma in the Jewish community, rabbis are finding more potential Jews in their offices and classrooms.

"We're working hard to not turn people away. We want to create more Jewish families, to welcome people into the Jewish community and at the same time be honest with people," Rabbi Grover says.

"I spend a lot of time doing conversions. We're overwhelmed with it," he adds. "We have to get it right." ■

Jenn Soer and her husband Michael and their two daughters, Abbie, left, and Emma, on her father's shoulders.
LIL ONE PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

Finding a home in Judaism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

He converted while working in political life in Quebec City. "I had a couple of acquaintances who said it [conversion] would harm your political career. I never felt that. I never felt any prejudice or discrimination. People were very accommodating," he recalls.

Educating potential converts and making synagogues more welcoming is something Rabbi Adam Cutler, who oversees conversions at Beth Tzedec Congregation, a Toronto Conservative shul, thinks deeply about. At his synagogue, a conversion support committee ensures that people in the process of choosing Judaism have someone to sit with at services and to invite them for holiday meals.

"I think we are a welcoming and inclusive place," he said. "But we're pretty white. Those who convert who aren't white, I wouldn't be surprised if they feel a sense of otherness."

Jenn Soer, a second-generation Chinese-Canadian who converted to Judaism four years ago through the Conservative movement, agrees. She and her Jewish husband visited a number of shuls before finding one where they felt they belonged.

"I obviously don't look Jewish. It was difficult at times," she said. "Going to certain shuls, sometimes people would whisper."

Older people who have seen with her children have on occasion assumed she was their nanny. "That hit me hard," she said.

But both her husband's and her own family were supportive of her conversion, which was easier than she had anticipated.

Today, with her little girls enrolled in a Hebrew-speaking daycare and Jewish after-school programs, she feels part of the community. "We're surrounding ourselves with the right people, and we're very comfortable," she says.

Steve McDonald was raised in a Christian evangelical home, but wasn't religiously observant when two life-changing events happened. "I met a Jewish girl and I went to Israel."

McDonald, who was working in the Jewish community, studied with a Conservative rabbi and converted. "I spent a year studying and I fell in love with Jewish ethics."

Conversion is the most contentious issue in Jewish life, tapping deep into the community's fears about assimilation, he says. "People often look at the denomination you're converted [with] and make a judgment. People have no concept of what the Halachah requires."

McDonald's Conservative conversion isn't accepted in Israel, but that's a matter for Israelis to decide, he says."Overwhelmingly, the majority of Israelis welcome me if you say you're Jewish and live a Jewish life."

Erin Bolling, of Ottawa, began considering conversion when her son was born, but like McDonald, it was Judaism's ethical values that ultimately attracted her. The final push came when she and her Jewish common-law husband discussed her elderly father moving in with them. Her partner said "the most important thing is to honour your parents. It just touched me deeply."

Bolling converted two years ago, and while her father rejoiced with her, an uncle refused to attend her Jewish wedding.

"That's life," Bolling says. Her siblings have been very supportive of her new religious identity and attended pro-Israel rallies with her this summer.

"Sometimes people talk about having a Jewish soul. I really think that speaks to me. Judaism makes me feel at home." ■

INTERNATIONAL

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Israeli election now a two-way race

HAVIV RETTIG GUR
JERUSALEM

It doesn't make sense. Labor party leader Isaac Herzog polls at a steady 15 Knesset seats. Hatnua's Tzipi Livni, meanwhile, struggles to hold on to the four-seat minimum required to pass the Knesset's electoral threshold.

So when one tries to understand the new rotation deal inked between the two politicians on Dec. 10, and unanimously adopted by the Labor party last Sunday, the key question is not why Livni thought it was a good idea, but why Herzog did. Why would the Labor chief concede so much – half his term if he is elected prime minister – to a political partner with so little to offer?

It is a question that goes to the heart of Herzog's strategy for finally unseating three-term prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Under the terms of the deal, the two will share the prime ministership on rotation, with Herzog as prime minister the first two years and Livni the last two years, should they win the upcoming elections.

The left has lost five consecutive national elections. But it didn't lose them to the right. Since the outbreak of the second intifadah in 2000, many left-leaning Israelis have voted centre and even centre-right as a signal of their distrust of Palestinian intentions – and of Israeli politicians who urge them to rely on those intentions.

Netanyahu, who will be in his seventh consecutive year in power by election day on March 17, won the last two elections on the strength of those centrist votes. As a September poll by the Knesset channel (Israel's C-SPAN) noted, only one-quarter of Israelis believe Netanyahu's views represent the Israeli right. Most Israelis believe he is a centrist.

In the Knesset, it was the 25 centrist seats of Livni's Hatnua and Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid that gave Netanyahu his commanding majority in the outgoing coalition, and centrists such as Moshe Kahlon and the ultra-Orthodox Shas party who, if all goes according to Netanyahu's plan, appear slated to give him the necessary seats to form the next. (Shas has sat in Labor governments before; Kahlon, a former Likud minister, has emphatically said he is not wedded to a Likud-led coalition.)

Yet Israel's political centre is actually far larger than the parties who formally declare themselves to be "centrist." On the key issue that defines the left-right axis, Palestinian statehood, polls have shown that as many as half of those who vote for the explicitly right-wing parties Likud, Yisrael Beitenu and even Jewish Home actually support Palestinian statehood. Countless polls suggest that Israeli centrists – usually defined by pundits as those who support Palestinian independence while distrusting Palestinian willingness to reciprocate with peace – vote for the right because they hear their skepticism reflected in the rhetoric of right-wing leaders.

Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni hold a joint press conference in Tel Aviv on Dec. 10, announcing a unity deal. FLASH90 PHOTO

For 20 years, Herzog's predecessors – Labor has seen 11 leadership changes in 22 years – have been fighting a losing battle against this vast, inchoate centre.

But last week, Herzog launched the left's most dramatic bid since the 1990s for the Israeli centre's trust.

The Labor leader has largely abandoned the left-wing rhetoric about reconciliation and peace, and argues for the simpler and more widely supported idea of separation. Without the two-state solution, he tells Israelis in speeches and media interviews, Israel will remain entangled in Palestinian affairs – and in Palestinian political dysfunction and extremism.

Now Herzog is solidifying that strategy, and made a dramatic show last week of sacrificing his personal ambitions for the benefit of the cause. A vote for him, he now says, is literally also a vote for the centrist Livni.

And even as he cemented the centrist strategy of his own party, a move that early polls suggest will find favour with voters, he headed off a significant threat to his dominance of the centre-left: Yair Lapid. Herzog, not Lapid, now sits squarely atop what is by far the largest anti-Netanyahu bloc.

In one fell swoop, Herzog pushed ahead of the pack and transformed a lacklustre political position into the most significant threat to Netanyahu in a crowded field. From this position of strength, Herzog hopes to attract centrists who have come to dislike Netanyahu, leftists who voted for other parties or causes because they did not believe a Labor vote would bring a Labor victory, and perhaps even liberal Arabs who may find their political voices sidelined in a new unified Arab list.

And since few Israeli governments survive past their third year – the next government will be Israel's 34th in 67 years – simply by taking the first two-year turn in the rotation, the Labor leader made certain he was probably not giving up as much in reality as the terms of the rotation agreement might suggest.

The first signal of the potential threat that Herzog's shrewd manoeuvre may signify for Netanyahu came in the Likud's official response to the announcement. "Now Boujie [Herzog] and Tzipi can compete over who will surrender and concede more," came the unusually acerbic response. "To the citizens of Israel, it is clear that these elections are between the left camp headed by Herzog and Livni, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud leading the national camp."

The accusation that the new alliance would "surrender and concede," and the emphatic labelling of the pairing as "the left camp," almost certainly presage the Likud's counter-campaign to the new Herzog strategy – and signal that both sides understand the significance of Labor's gambit for the centre.

Indeed, the very fact that it is now possible to speak of "both sides" is significant. For the first time in a long time, polls suggest there are now two sides in an Israeli election. It is hard to overstate how dangerous this is for Netanyahu. The prime minister has a primary race to win in the next three weeks, and his primary voters, by and large, are not centrists. But after (and of course, if) he wins the primary, he will face a complicated challenge. Jewish Home is attracting hundreds of thousands of voters on his right flank; Kahlon and Lapid, through sheer personal charisma, draw perhaps 10 seats each on his left; and now a growing electoral power has emerged on the other side of the aisle that could form a credible anchor for an alternative coalition to his own.

Pulled simultaneously to the right and to the left, Netanyahu must find a way to please everyone or risk losing it all.

Until last week, both right and left saw the election as a referendum on Netanyahu. While the race is still Netanyahu's to lose – his electoral path to a coalition is still shorter than Herzog's – Labor's dramatic move to the centre has broken the old rules and brought an unexpected degree of uncertainty to the race.

And Herzog, seen by most Israelis as a grey, uncharismatic public servant, has shown a new side to his personality, a streak of political cunning and strategic ability more often associated with the man he is trying to unseat.

The race, at long last, is on. ■

Times of Israel
timesofIsrael.com

OPINION

You can take the Canadian out of Canada...

Rachel Cook

If you asked me a year ago what "Flexigidity" was, I would have thought you were crazy. Flexibility and rigidity, two opposites, together? In one word? Madness!

But this year, my placement is supporting the Flexigidity Project. So, in a matter of months, I went from not knowing anything about the Flexigidity movement to spending a large portion of my day talking about how Judaism, as a society as well as a religion, needs to be open to change and, at the same time, needs to cling to our roots.

As I spend a year away from Canada participating in the MASA Israel Government Fellowship Program, I have discovered that there are many rewards to be had from being "flexigid" at a personal level as well. I expected to find some differences between Toronto (where I attended university) and Tel Aviv. The shuk has replaced Honest Ed's as my shopping go-to, "sababa" has replaced "cool" in my daily vocabulary, and rugelach have replaced Timbits for breakfast. Those little things are the easiest to be flexible with, easy to enjoy and adjust to.

The more difficult things to get used to, such as feeling walked over when my Canadian politeness is mistaken by Israelis for weakness, feeling uncomfortable with strangers striking up a conversation with me on the bus, and feeling annoyed with the very relaxed approach to customer service here, have required more flexibility in my willingness to adjust, but have given way to amazing new experiences.

The first time I was able to buy a bag full of fruit for a handful of shekels, the Friday evening when a woman on the bus invited me home that evening for Shabbat dinner, or chatting with the shop attendant and hearing about his

> *By discovering which values I am willing to negotiate on, and which ones I am not, I am learning more about myself*

experience in the army all came about because of my ability to adapt and be flexible.

I have found, however, that I have to be more rigid in some areas of my life as well: my core values, my commitment to my friends and family back home, my connection to Judaism have all felt challenged during my stay so far. But sticking to these core truths about myself has made me stronger, and I feel more adaptable in other areas of my life as a result of my rigidity on these few issues. By discovering which values I am willing to negotiate on, and which ones I am not, I am learning more about myself as a woman, as well as what I want to do with my life after my year in Israel concludes. My ties to family, faith and belief in justice have become stronger than ever while living here.

As a people, we Jews are currently facing an unknown and terrifying future. We in the Diaspora are becoming more critical of Israel, less likely to stand up for Zionism. Israeli Jews are currently grappling with the idea of being a nation-state for the Jewish People and which adjective to use to define themselves as, Jewish or Israeli.

It is my hope that my year here will enable me to contribute to both discussions and bring our people together to face a dangerous and uncertain world, to teach my peers on both sides of the Atlantic to be "flexigid" when evaluating each other. ■

Rachel Cook is a Begin fellow, currently interning at the Reut Institute in Tel Aviv

Jack Weinbaum ז"ל
1922-2014

Baycrest extends sincerest condolences to the Weinbaum Family. Beloved husband of Anne, loving father and father-in-law of Carol and Nigel, Allan and Karen. Devoted grandfather of Callum, Luke, Tom, Jonathan, and Adam.

May his memory be a blessing.

Baycrest

SPORER, HANIA ז"ל

Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University and the YU Torah Mitzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov mourn the passing of Edith "Hania" Sporer,ז"ל, beloved wife of Harry Sporer and mother of Mrs. Marsha Lax. Togeather with her husband, Hania Sporer supported many worthy causes benefitting Toronto and Worldwide Jewry.

Mrs. Sporer was respected and admired and will be sorely missed by all who knew her. Heartfelt condolences are extended to Mr. Harry Sporer and to Marsha and Michael Lax and family. May they all be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yeshiva University

Richard M. Joel, President, Yeshiva University
Jeremy Magence, President, CFYU
Eli Rubinstein, President, YU Torah Mitzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov
Stuart Haber, National Director CFYU

Australia's Jewish community on alert after hostage drama

JTA
SYDNEY

Australia's Jewish community went into official lockdown last Monday after a gunman held hostages inside an inner-city café in Sydney.

Television images showed two hostages holding a black-and-white flag with the Arabic text of the Shahada – the affirmation of Islam – at the window of Lindt cafe.

Counter-terror agents swarmed the city centre, evacuating the Opera House and other key sites as Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott told the media the gunman had a "political motivation."

"This is a very disturbing incident," he said. "It is profoundly shocking that innocent people should be held hostage by an armed person claiming political motivation."

By nightfall, five hostages had escaped or been freed. At *The CJN's* press time Monday, more than a dozen hostages reportedly remained captive over 12 hours after the siege began.

"Jewish institutions across Australia are in lockdown, excursions have been cancelled and tight security measures are in place," a senior Jewish official said.

At least one major Jewish institution in Sydney issued a "code red" emergency alert; the building was sealed with no one allowed to enter or exit for several hours before the alert was lifted.

Israel's Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon said it was "most likely the work of an Islamist terrorist organization."

"We have excellent relations with Australia, and help in whatever way we can," Yaalon told Army Radio. "There are things that can be done from a distance."

Gad Elbaz, an Israeli Sephardi singer who played a concert in Sydney on Sunday, was inside Lindt café with his father moments before the hostages were taken captive.

On Facebook, Benny Elbaz described it as a "Chanukah miracle."

"The worst almost happened," he wrote. "A few minutes before the attack on the cafe in Sydney my friends and I left there."

"While thankful, my father and I are praying and hoping for a quick release of all the hostages safely and without harm," Gad Elbaz said. ■

Jets scramble after Hamas launches drone

MARISSA NEWMAN
JERUSALEM

Hamas' military wing launched a locally manufactured drone at a Gaza City march in honour of the founding of the group Dec. 14, prompting the Israel Air Force to raise its alertness level.

The drone activity led the air force to summon jets to the area, but no shots were fired at the unmanned aircraft, Channel 2 reported.

The drone demonstration was held at the terror group's 27th anniversary march, with thousands in attendance, including senior members, as the Gaza terror group ramped up its rhetoric against Israel.

The protest also featured a rare appearance by members of the Hamas naval commando unit. Weapons were on display, including R-160 rockets of the sort fired at Haifa during the summer's Operation Protective Edge, and another drone which the terror group said was an Israeli Defence Force (IDF) craft grounded during the 50-day conflict.

Earlier, the terror group released a video which they said showed Muhammed Deif, a Hamas military leader targeted by the IDF over the summer and whose condition is unknown. Hamas has maintained that terror chief Deif survived the Aug. 19 assassination attempt, in which his wife and child were killed.

In the new footage, a silhouette is shown, which the terror group said is Deif, but the audio is drawn from a November 2012 clip, Channel 2 reported.

Speaking at the rally, a Hamas official threatened that a "moment of explosion" was near.

"We warn of the moment of explosion which won't be in the interest of the occupation," a spokesman for the military wing, Abu Ubayda, said at the rally, according to the Palestinian *Ma'an News Agency*. He also turned to the Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons and said: "The day you will see the light of freedom has become closer than any point in the past."

In a separate Gaza Strip protest two days earlier, members of the terror group burned a life-sized stuffed model of a haredi Jew over a number of coffin-like structures bearing the faces of the four victims of the Har Nof synagogue attack. A paper replica of the Temple was burned in the same blaze as well. ■

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Jerusalem mayor presents new master plan for city

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Within 20 years, probably even sooner, the population of Jerusalem will hit one million people. If the present demographic breakdown continues, more than one-third of them will be Palestinians, most of them permanent residents rather that Israeli citizens.

Whatever their legal status, they will need a place to live, and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat says he intends to build 50,000 apartments over the next few years for both Israeli and Palestinian residents of the city. About two-thirds of these new homes will be built in primarily Jewish neighbourhoods, and one-third in Arab neighbourhoods.

"Jews prefer to live in Jewish neighbourhoods and Arabs prefer to live in Arab neighbourhoods," Barkat told a group of journalists on a press tour of the city. "You should be aware that there are more Arabs living in predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods than there are Jews living in predominantly Arab neighbourhoods. And the Arabs living there don't need any kind of protection."

Barkat said he is committed to improving the quality of life in the Arab sector in east Jerusalem, which Israel annexed in 1967. Palestinians maintain that east Jerusalem must be the capital of a future Palestinian state. In an interview, he said he is committed to bringing the infrastructure in east Jerusalem in line with that of west Jerusalem.

"We are in the process of giving street names and numbers to all of the streets in east Jerusalem," he told the *Media Line*. "We had 500 roads with no names, so we are doing this with the local residents. It's important in the process of improving quality of life and increasing the value of the properties."

There has long been a shortage of classrooms in east Jerusalem, and Barkat has built 171 new ones, including several brand-new schools like the Beit Hanina Comprehensive School. The school serves 620 girls from grades 7 to 12. On a recent Sunday, several dozen girls were attending enrichment classes or working on a science project, even though it was a weekend.

"I like this school a lot and I am concentrating on science," Samar Hamdan, 13, told the *Media Line*. "I hope to be a doctor one day."

Principal Lianna Jaber, a mother of three who is also working on her PhD at Hebrew University, said the school encourages young women to study math and science and provides extra-curricular support to do so.

There is still a long way to go before Palestinians in east Jerusalem receive the same services as their Jewish neighbours. Despite the fact that east Jerusalem has 36 per cent of the population, less than 10 per cent of the Jerusalem municipal budget is allocated to projects and spending there, including only 2.1 per cent of the cultural budget, 4.4 per cent of the welfare budget and 1.1 per cent of the business development budget, according to Ir Amim, a dovish group that advocates for Palestinian rights.

Poverty levels in east Jerusalem are dramatically high, with more than three-quarters of the residents defined as poor. Most Palestinians in Jerusalem are permanent residents rather than citizens, as they see accepting citizenship as legitimizing Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem, which they oppose. According to the Association for Civil Rights, Israel has revoked the Jerusalem residency of 14,309 Palestinians from 1967 to 2013, if they have been out of the city for more than seven years. Jews who leave for a similar amount of time do not lose their residency or citizenship.

"Successive Israeli governments have primarily sought to maintain the demographic balance and limit and restrict the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem," Sarit Michaeli, the spokesperson of Btselem, an Israeli human rights group, said. "Israel has expropriated a massive amount of land in east Jerusalem, most of it Palestinian, to build neighbourhoods for Jews."

Barkat says he will build new housing projects in all parts of Jerusalem, despite international criticism of some of the building. The ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood of Ramat Shlomo, in northern Jerusalem, became a point of contention in 2010, when Israel announced it would build 1,600 new homes there just as U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden was visiting. Under American pressure, Israel backed off, but these new homes are now part of Barkat's new master plan.

"Right now we are standing right here on this porch, on the west side of Ramat Shlomo, which is a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood, and on the map around the neighbourhood you see this strip," Barkat said, holding up a large map showing where the new construction will be. "We will build 800 units here, and north of us another 800 units."

If the building goes ahead, it could spark more tensions with the U.S. President Barack Obama's administration. ■

The Media Line
themedialine.org

Women of the Wall denied Chanukah ceremony

JERUSALEM
JTA

A request by Women of the Wall to hold a Chanukah candlelighting ceremony in the women's section of the holy site was denied.

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the rabbinic authority of the Western Wall and holy places, denied its request, Women of the Wall said in a statement Dec. 14. According to the group, Rabinowitz said the menorah lit on the men's side can be seen by all.

"It is difficult not to suspect that Women of the Wall's real intention is not prayer but rather their determination to change the customs at the Western Wall at any cost, while offending many of the masses of those who pray at the Western Wall and the traditions developed there over hundreds of years of prayer," Rabinowitz wrote in his denial letter.

In its statement, Women of the Wall said its members will bring their own menorahs to the wall on Dec. 18 and light them together in the women's section. The group meets at the Western Wall once a month for prayers for the new month.

Women have the same obligation as men to light a Chanukah menorah, the organization pointed out.

"Unfortunately, Rabinowitz does not recognize the genuine intention and right that Jewish women have to heartfelt prayer at the Kotel," Women of the Wall wrote. "He has chosen to respond negatively to such a basic request for Women of the Wall and many other women to hold a Jewish ritual at the Kotel, which is permissible and required of us according to Jewish law."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined to respond to the denial, Women of the Wall said in its statement. Writing to Netanyahu last month, the group asked that a large menorah equivalent to the one lit in the men's section be placed in the women's section, allowing the women to hold their own public lighting.

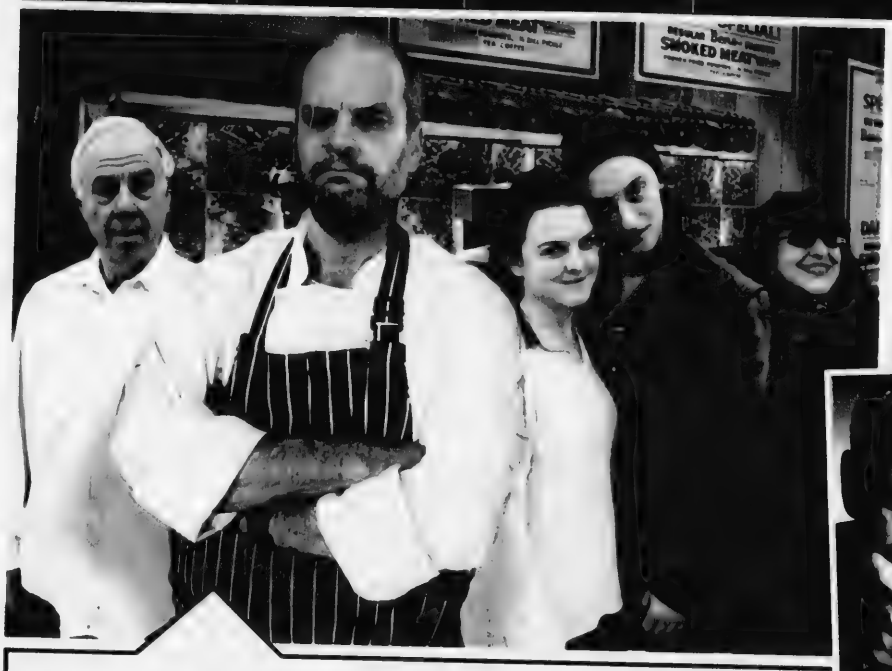
Netanyahu transferred the letter to Vice Minister of Religious Affairs, Eli Ben Dahan, who passed the letter on to Rabinowitz. ■

FLASH90 PHOTO

Ray of light

A full rainbow is seen over Jerusalem after a rainfall earlier this month.

Jewish Life



From left, Allan Price, Ron Boyd, Madeline Leon, Aris Tyros and Gloria Valentine in Teatron Toronto's *Delimax*. Inset, Harvey Ostroff.

Play pits Holocaust against Quebec's language laws

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Playwright Harvey Ostroff had a flash of inspiration while he and his wife were eating at the Snowdon Delicatessen on one of their visits to Montreal.

It was 1983 and Ostroff, a former Montrealer, noticed that the restaurant sign he was familiar with had been changed to DeliSnowdon. Ostroff was aware of the implications of Bill 101, Quebec's 1977 French language charter, he said, but he was still surprised that the deli's name had been altered.

The restaurant's owner told Ostroff that the "language police had been by," and ordered him to change the English sign and also to provide a French-only menu to comply with Bill 101. A customer in the restaurant who overheard the conversation muttered, "This is just like the Nazis coming back."

Based on that exchange, Ostroff wrote the first draft of *DeliMax*, a play about Max Farber, the Jewish owner of a Montreal delicatessen and a survivor of Auschwitz, who believes that the nationalism rising in Quebec is Germany in the 1930s revisited.

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre is mounting a production of *DelixMax* that opens in Toronto in early January.

On the evening of the biggest ice storm in years, Max's French-Canadian waitress, Monique, and her boyfriend, Rejean, who denies the Holocaust and says the English population and the Jews should be banished from Quebec in order to end the oppression of the people, are stranded in the deli. Max, along with his partner, Nathan, who is also a Holocaust survivor, decide to teach the couple the true meaning of oppression.

Ostroff's research for *DeliMax* included interviewing Holocaust survivors at Montreal's Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors and the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Ostroff said that a few of the survivors he spoke to connected Quebec nationalism with Nazism.

"Some people were worried," Ostroff said. Reflecting on the ultra-nationalist views held by a segment of Quebecers, he added, "That's what it was like in the '80s for some people."

Ostroff, who now lives near White Rock, B.C., said the Parti Québécois was decimated in the Quebec provincial election last April because of its proposed charter of values, Bill 60, aimed to secularize Quebecers. The bill was controversial, especially its proposed prohibition of public sector employees from wearing or displaying "conspicuous" religious symbols. The bill was "a consternation to Jews and Muslims who didn't want to be secularized. It was a mistake to bring it up," Ostroff said.

"That time has passed in Quebec." He added that today's Quebecers feel "they're a part of a generation, not apart from a nation."

Ari Weisberg, Teatron's artistic director and *DeliMax's* director, received the script for the play six years ago. He said he decided to produce the play this season because he made a connection between the controversy created by the charter of values and memories he has of Quebec politics over the years.

DeliMax was produced in Washington and Oregon in 1985, and Teatron's production is the Canadian premiere. In the Teatron production, Ron Boyd plays deli owner Max; Gloria Valentine plays Yetta, an old friend of Max's; Allan Price is Nathan; Madeline Leon plays the waitress Monique, and Aris Tyros plays the ultra-nationalist Rejean.

"*DeliMax* is a very strong drama," Weisberg said. "It brings together Holocaust memories as well as the situation in Montreal. They are both strong topics."

Each season, Teatron's plays have a unifying theme, and this season's theme is works that don't shy away from controversy, Weisberg said.

Peace Warriors, which ran in November, explored anti-Israelism, while *The Value of Names*, which opens in February, delves into the McCarthy era. *DeliMax* pits the Holocaust against Quebec's language laws. Teatron holds audience discussions after each show. ■

Teatron Theatre presents DeliMax at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St., Jan. 7 to 18, 2015. For tickets: Toronto Centre for the Arts box office, 5040 Yonge St.; Ticketmaster 1-855-985-ARTS (2787) and online at www.teatrontheatre.com.

TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre

DELIMAN

by Harvey Ostroff

Directed by Ari Weisberg

January 7 - 18, 2015

Max Farber, the Jewish owner of a Montreal delicatessen, a survivor of Auschwitz, believes that the new nationalism arising in Quebec is the 1940s revisited. On the evening of the biggest storm in years, he decides to teach his French Canadian waitress and her ultra-nationalistic boyfriend a lesson. Has he gone too far?

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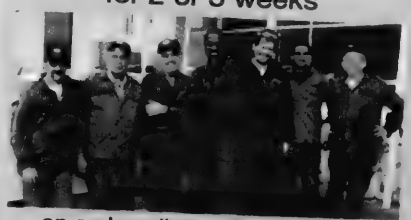

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Sephardi chief rabbi was one of most influential, author says

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Following a relationship with the late Rabbi Ovadia Yosef that spanned almost a decade and included six years of diligent research, Yehuda Azoulay has published a book about the Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel, who was equally influential and controversial.

"Encyclopedic Torah knowledge, fearless conviction, compassion and concern for each and every Jew, tireless energy, clarity of thought and expression – it is this combination of outstanding qualities that has made Hacham Ovadia Yosef the most influential rabbinic figure of our generation and one of the most influential rabbis in hundreds of years," Azoulay wrote in the introduction of his 700-page book, released as part of a series published through the Sephardic Legacy Series Institute, a non-profit organization Azoulay founded years ago to promote Sephardi culture.

Speaking to *The CJN* about *Maran – The Life and Scholarship of Hacham Ovadia Yosef*, Azoulay said he was drawn to the Baghdad-born rabbi, who died last year at the age of 93, ever since he met him 10 years ago.

"When I was 18, I had attended his lectures in Hebrew when I was in yeshiva [in Israel]. I was drawn towards him, his scholarship and his humour. Granted, many people may consider him controversial," he said, "but there is no rabbi in the State of Israel over the last 65 years, from both a Sephardi and Ashkenazi perspective – everyone would agree with me unanimously – about how influential this rabbi was," Azoulay said.

"I got close to him because I pretty much pushed my way in to get familiar with his family. I was with them for the holidays. I would fly in from Toronto or New York when I used to live there... As time went on, they brought me within their quarters... We had a relationship," he said adding his research included one-on-one interviews with the rabbi, Knesset members, family members and others who were close to him.

He said over the past six years, he and a team of five researchers read 28 Hebrew biographies about the rabbi, and all of Rabbi Yosef's 53 books.

"His books are beyond academic – only religious people who understand the questions and answers and so on would appreciate the scholarship," he said. "Within those books there were anecdotes. He talked about experiences in his life, about World War II, he talked about Hitler, about the Damascus blood libel in the 18th century, he goes through history, talks about life and experiences through Jewish law."

Yehuda Azoulay NECHAMA LEITNER PHOTO

> *He created an identity and a framework for the Sephardi Jews of the Land of Israel*

Azoulay said one of the things he admired about the rabbi was his diligence.

"He was extremely focused as an individual and had an unbelievable dedication to Torah study, as well as a sensitivity towards every single Jew," he said.

"I think the overall message that I learned from him personally is that you shouldn't take time for granted. He was all about time. He was extremely accomplished."

Although he acknowledged that the rabbi, who was founder and leader of Israel's Shas party, had found himself in hot water over the years because of comments he made about victims of the Holocaust, the victims of Hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans in 2005, and the role of Jewish women, among other issues, Azoulay decided not to delve deeply into those issues in his book.

"Many Jews have a negative impression of Hacham Ovadia due to his political involvement and his sometimes biting style of expression," he wrote in the book's introduction. "This biography will touch on various controversies surrounding this larger-than-life figure, but we will by no means attempt to justify all the comments taken out of context and bandied about by critics [and] the media. We feel that political faux pas are extraneous to this study."

What's more important is the positive influence he had on Jewish and Israeli society, he said.

"Because of him there are 80,000 Ethiopian Jews – every Ethiopian in the state of Israel is considered Jewish thanks to him."

In the 1970s, following his appointment as Israel's Sephardi chief rabbi, he ruled that Ethiopian Jews were unquestionably Jewish, allowing them to marry other Jews without having to convert.

"Furthermore, he created both an identity and a halachic framework for the Sephardi Jews of the Land of Israel that will not dissolve with his passing," Azoulay said.

"He left a major void in the Sephardi world in terms of leadership. There is really no one like him. There are other chief rabbis, great rabbis, but definitely, over the past 100 years, no one has done what he's done and everybody knows that and no one would disagree with me." ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

SERIES OF SPECIAL EVENTS PLANNED FOR ISRAEL MUSEUM'S 50th ANNIVERSARY

The Israel Museum of Jerusalem is set to celebrate its 50th anniversary next year with a year-long series of special exhibitions reflecting on its achievements and underscoring the local and universal dimensions of its collections and programming.

Exhibitions will highlight the shared narratives of cultures and civilizations worldwide and feature seminal works in the museum's holdings as well as masterworks on loan from sister institutions.

Since the museum's founding by **Teddy Kollek** in 1965, "we have made remarkable strides in building a pre-eminent collection that stretches across the breadth of world culture," said museum director **James S. Snyder**.

Beginning next March, "1965 Today" will present several solo exhibitions by contemporary Israeli artists, as well as an examination of Israel's visual culture of 50 years ago, immersing visitors in the visual character of Israel both then and now.

In May, "A Brief History of Humankind" will present a series of seminal objects – from the first evidence of communal fire nearly 800,000 years ago, to early depictions of gods and goddesses, to the earliest evidence of writing, and finally to **Albert Einstein's** original manuscript for the special theory of relativity – that each in its own way represents a turning point in the trajectory of human history.

Other exhibitions planned for the anniversary year include "Twilight Over Berlin," a showing of 50 German avant-garde masterworks from the first half of the 20th century.

For more about the museum, please visit the website www.english.imjnet.org.il

• • •

Play about Montreal Deli: Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre presents *Delimax*, a play that **Harvey Ostroff** wrote after visiting the former Snowdon Delicatessen in Montreal, which was forced to change its name to DeliMax due to Quebec's language laws. The work focuses on Max Farber, a Holocaust survivor and owner of a Montreal delicatessen who believes that the new nationalism arising in Quebec is Germany in the 1930s revisited.

Teatron's production of the Canadian premiere of Delimax is directed by **Ari Weisberg** and features actors **Ron Boyd**, **Gloria Valentine**, **Madeline Leon**, **Allan Price** and **Aris Tyros**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. Jan. 7 to 18. $26 to $48; previews $19. www.teatrontheatre.com

• • •

New in Print: Toronto's **Joseph Kertes**, dean of creative and performing arts at Humber College and author of the award-winning Holocaust-themed novel *Gratitude*, has recently come out with a new novel. *The Afterlife of Stars* focuses on the Beck family, who are forced to flee Budapest on the brink of the Hungarian revolution and go to the apartment of a mysterious aunt. The Becks "grapple with religion, sibling rivalry, family secrets, and incalculable loss to arrive at a place they thought they'd lost forever: home." Kertes was also the founder of creative writing and comedy programs at Humber. *The Afterlife of Stars* is published by Penguin Random House of Canada.

• • •

New in Print II: *Emiliano's Discovery*, a first novel by Winnipeg-born lawyer **Paula Hurwitz**, focuses on a Buenos Aires Jewish man whose life is torn apart by a targeted explosion, and comes to Canada in the aftermath to locate long-lost members of his extended family. Published by FriesenPress, the book "is a journey both through history and a personal one of genealogy, roots and self discovery," says Hurwitz, a lawyer who now lives in Toronto with her family.

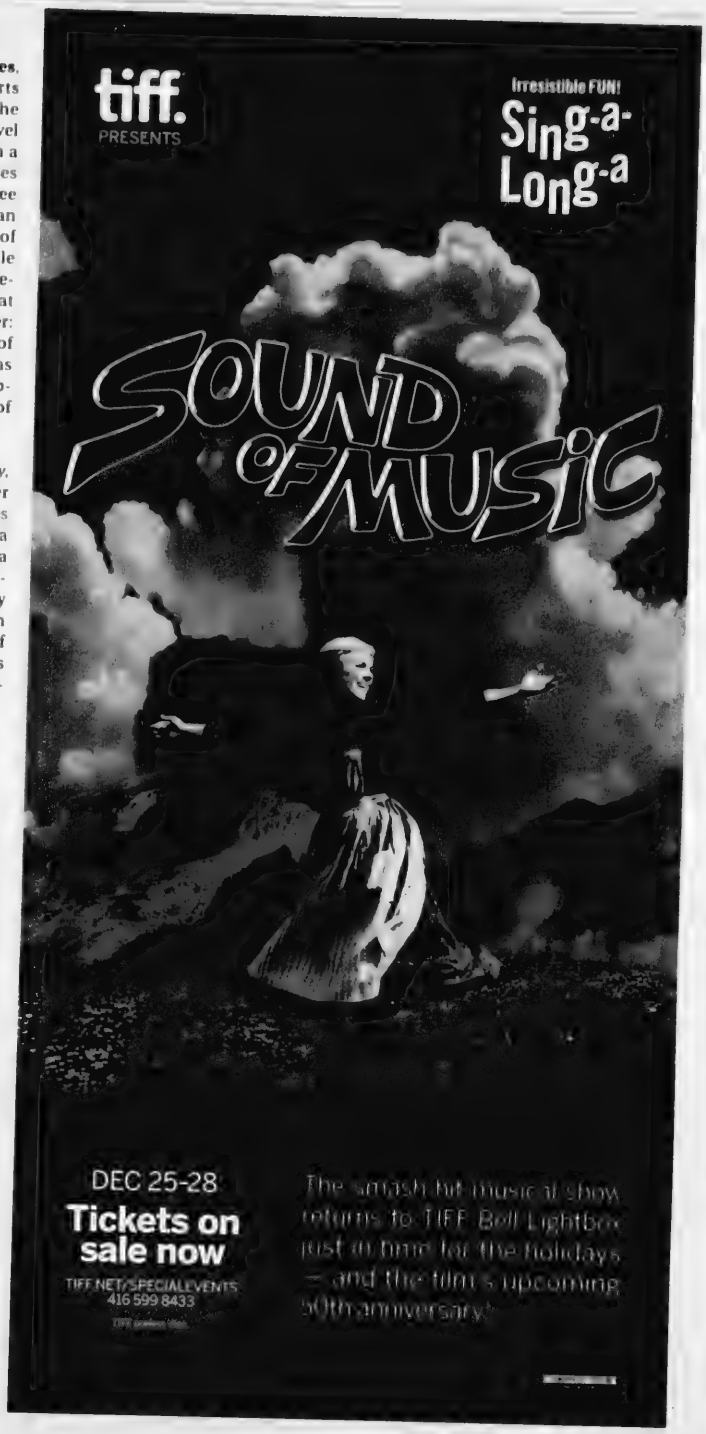
• • •

Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Keven Courrier** presents "Forbidden Desires: the Films of Alfred Hitchcock," a series of lectures with film clips that show how **Hitchcock** made voyeurism an acceptable dramatic strategy in films such as *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rear Window* and *Psycho*. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays from Jan. 5 to Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m. Series $50, drop-in $12, students $6. To register, please phone 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• The sixth annual Evening of Music and Comedy is a "fun-filled, talent-packed show" featuring jazz pianist **Steve Koven** and other musicians and comedians. Tickets $25. Todmorden Mills Papermill Theatre, 67 Pottery Rd. Saturday Jan. 10, doors open 7 p.m., show starts 8 p.m. Free parking, cash bar. For tickets, please email sktrio@interlog.com ■

Steve Koven.



Marks was acclaimed food writer and historian

JTA

Gil Marks, an acclaimed Jewish food writer and historian, has died.

Marks, who had been battling lung cancer for three years, died Dec. 5 in Jerusalem. He was 62.

He was the author of five books on the subject of Jewish food and was the founding editor of *Kosher Gourmet Magazine*. His 2004 cookbook, *Olive Trees and Honey: A Treasury of Vegetarian Recipes from Jewish Communities Around the World* was a winner in the 2005 James Beard Foundation Awards, an annual awards show often referred to as the "Oscars of Food."

In 2010, Marks published *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*, the first attempt within the American Jewish culinary community to compile a comprehensive reference guide for Jewish food. The critically acclaimed volume was nominated for another James Beard Award, and earned Marks a spot on the Forward 50, a list of the 50 most influential American Jews of that year.

Gil Marks

Along with his accomplishments in the world of food, Marks was also an Orthodox rabbi, with ordination from a Yeshiva University affiliate.

Marks, who lived most of his life in New York, was diagnosed with lung cancer in November 2011 and made aliyah to Israel the following year. He was active on social media, and documented his three-year struggle with the disease on Facebook along with personal posts about food, Judaism and family. ■

Kooglets – kosher, pareve mini-kugels from the freezer

CAROLYN BLACKMAN
cblackman@thecjn.ca

Norene Gilletz's picture is well known on her numerous kosher cookbooks and on her website, Gourmania.

The Toronto-based cookbook author, writer, editor, food consultant and food technician and stylist now has her face on products in the kosher freezer section of the local grocery store.

Last month, Gilletz introduced Koogletz, her line of frozen mini-kugels available in potato, sweet potato and confetti (carrot and zucchini.)

The seeds for the Koogletz were planted about five years ago, Gilletz said, while she was on a plane headed for the annual Kosherfest near New York City.

"Michael Nadler of Central-Epicure, told me he had been looking to start a new food brand, but had never found the right partner. We met, and together with chefs Yehuda Goldberg and Mona Pasternak, as well as a food technologist, developed the idea of the savoury little cupcakes or kugels.

"They took recipes from my cookbooks and modified them so they'd become a freezable, commercial product with home-cooked taste. It was a long process, but definitely worth it."

She said her daughter, Jodi Sprackman, who lives in Vancouver, suggested that given Gilletz's name, they call the product Koogletz.

Gilletz said they came up with packaging and got it into grocery stores. "Before we knew it, it was flying off the shelves. People all over North America began asking for it. I am *farklempt* with the huge response we've gotten, especially when my sister said, 'Mom would have loved these.'"

She said the product, which comes six in a box of one variety, is perfect for kids' lunchboxes, young cooks or anyone who wants a quick side for dinner or lunch.

"It's real food with real ingredients – no fillers or preservatives. They are pareve and gluten-free, and each one at 80 calories, is made by hand, just like I would do in my kitchen. The difference, though, is these go from the freezer right to the oven, and they're ready in about 30 minutes."

Gilletz said that at age 74, she finds this an "exciting adventure. It's hard work, but it is creative and fun. I'm always working on multiple projects, but with Koogletz, I've reinvented myself. I've taken my knowledge and used it in new, creative ways."

Koogletz are available in such stores as Coppa's, Sobeys, Nortown Foods, Daiter's and Taste of Israel. They are also available in the Cavendish Mall IGA in Montreal. ■

Bring comfort food to a friend

SUE EPSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When we take food to friends who have been ill or suffered a loss, we also bring love. The ritual of going to a friend's house with pot holders in our hands and caring in our hearts is played out thousands of times in Jewish communities worldwide. The power of this outreach is boundless.

Ill or grieving people may not have an appetite, but as the hours pass, they may begin to feel "like eating a little something." Here are some tips and ideas for what to bring and how to bring it.

Fluids become imperative, and bottled water, 100 per cent-fruit juices, fresh coffee and herbal tea offer comfort. Sherbet, a dish of applesauce, a plain turkey sandwich or a carton of yogurt sound good. When I came home from a recent hospitalization for pneumonia, I craved a fresh salad after a week of hospital food. And, of course, chicken soup, or any other soup is always welcome.

One-dish main courses are probably the easiest, for both the cook and the recipient. Designed to be made ahead, they're also no problem to heat up when it's time to serve.

Lighter appetites might relish a cold salad of tangy tuna or fresh fruit as a side dish, or for the main meal at lunch.

If you are going to bring a meal or part of a meal to someone, first find out how many people you will be cooking for and if they have any special dietary needs such as food allergies or if they are salt-free, vegetarian, etc. If possible, find out what other people may be bringing so that the family doesn't receive the same dish four nights in a row.

When we send food to a friend or neighbour, none of us wants to seem stingy so we tend to send in too much. However, unless it's something that allows the leftovers to be frozen, much of it, such as salads, end up being thrown away, so keep your portions reasonable.

Do try to bring your offerings in disposable containers if possible. If not, be sure to mark your name on the container so that it can be returned to you. Also write down any cooking or heating instructions and whether leftovers are freezable.

Whatever your choice, you'll be showing someone you care and performing a great mitzvah.

And if day-to-day pressures find you too short of time to create an entree, you can still bring a smile to a needy friend or neighbour with a mouth-watering sour cream coffee cake.

Sour Cream Coffee Cake

More than just dessert, this tender cake also doubles as a breakfast option.

- ❑ 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- ❑ 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ❑ 1 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened
- ❑ 2 large egg whites
- ❑ 1 cup sour cream or pareve substitute
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ❑ 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350. Combine first 3 ingredients and set aside. Place granulated sugar and butter or margarine in a large bowl and beat with a mixer at medium speed until well-blended (about 5 minutes). Add egg whites, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in sour cream and vanilla.

Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cup, and level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt, stirring well with a whisk. Gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture; beat well. Spread half of batter into an 8-inch-square baking pan coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle half of walnut streusel over batter. Spread remaining batter over streusel. Top with remaining streusel.

Bake at 350 for 45 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool the cake on a wire rack. Makes 12 servings. ■

Two Kennedy speeches are among his most momentous

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

More than half a century after the presidency of John F. Kennedy ended in a tragic hail of bullets, Ottawa historian and university professor Andrew Cohen has mined some powerful but previously neglected material on JFK and written a book that could change the shape of his political legacy and legend in substantial ways.

In *Two Days in June: John F. Kennedy and the 48 Hours That Made History*, Cohen presents painstakingly detailed, hour-by-hour descriptions of two of Kennedy's 1,036 days in office – June 10 and 11, 1963 – and asserts that they were among the most momentous of his days at the White House.

Cohen bases the claim on two speeches that Kennedy gave on those days, one on the most urgent foreign-policy matter of the era – the nuclear arms race with the U.S.S.R. – and the other on the equally pressing domestic concern of civil rights and the desegregation of the American South. Both were central and defining issues of America in the '60s.

An admitted "JFK junkie" ever since he first heard the news of the Dallas assassination while a third-grade pupil in Montreal, Cohen was reportedly the first person to track down and view hours of raw film footage of Kennedy and others shot in the White House and other key locations during those two days in June. Cameramen working with filmmaker Robert Drew shot the footage and accompanying soundtrack while compiling a 52-minute documentary, *Crisis*, one of the earliest American films in the cinema-verite style, which aired on American television in October 1963.

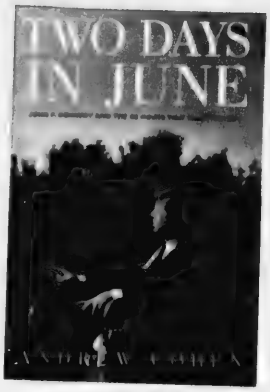
In an interview with *The CJN*, Cohen explained that he was curious about any unused footage from *Crisis* and telephoned Drew in 2012. The aging director, who was then about 88 years old and who died last July, told him that at least 26 hours of raw footage had been shot for the film and that it was being preserved at the Pickford Centre for Motion Picture Study in Hollywood.

"I went out there for five days," he recalled.

The many hours of grainy, black-and-white 16mm-film that Cohen viewed were focused largely on the charismatic and youthful president, his brother, attorney general Robert Kennedy, speech writer Ted Sorenson, Alabama governor George Wallace and other aides and individuals at various locations who were part of dramatically unfolding events during those two days.

"I guess what I want to convey is the sheer sense of immediacy that you have as a voyeur when dropped into the White House in 1963," Cohen said of his experience with the footage. "This is unscripted, this is just the cameras rolling, this is just Jack Kennedy in his office. I was rapt."

Soon after returning on an overnight flight from Hawaii, JFK delivered the speech on "world peace" as a commencement address at Washington's American University on the morning of June 10, 1963. Only eight months after the Cuban Missile Crisis, he was "not naïve about the Russians. He knew well their treachery, their brutality, their gulags, and their prisoners," Cohen writes. But he craved a new approach to peace, knowing that nuclear warfare could result in annihilation on both sides. Almost for the first time, he used language that humanized rather than demonized the Russians – never as eloquently as in this memorable speech, written covertly and without input from the Defense Department or the CIA.



Two Days in June: John F. Kennedy and the 48 Hours That Made History, by Andrew Cohen *(McClelland and Stewart)*

"If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity," intoned JFK in one of its most memorable passages. "For in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

Just as the president appealed to the American people to start seeing the Russians in a new way, so too he appealed to the nation to begin to see "Negroes" as full-fledged citizens, entitled to equal rights and privileges in all spheres of life. His June 11 speech on civil rights was delivered amidst an emerging crisis as Alabama governor Wallace vowed to stand in the doorway to keep black students from attending the hitherto-segregated University of Alabama.

Incredibly, Kennedy and Sorenson began drafting separate versions of the speech at 6 p.m., only two hours before the president was to deliver it on national television. Ultimately Kennedy relied upon an unfinished draft and extemporized – which he was extremely good at – through part of the 13-minute oration. "It's a great speech," said Cohen. "In fact, it's a flat-out masterpiece, I think. The speeches from those days, I think, are JFK's best."

As Cohen details, JFK's oration on nuclear arms became the basis for the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, and his speech on civil rights led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a watershed in American history.

Cohen uses many other intriguing sources to chronicle the events described in *Two Days in June*. He visited historian-diarist Lady Antonia Fraser in London, who opened her diaries to him and vividly recounted her conversation with JFK at a Georgetown dinner party on June 10. Cohen also drew upon the recently opened letters and diaries of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., the historian and presidential assistant, as well as those of Charles Ritchie, then Canada's ambassador to Washington. He also uncovered a draft presidential speech written by the gifted young novelist Richard Yates.

A teacher at Ottawa's Carleton University and former Washington correspondent for the *Globe and Mail*, Cohen is the author of six previous books on Canadian subjects, including *Why Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (2003) and biographies of Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau (with J. L. Granatstein). *Two Days in June* is his first major foray into American history.

How is it possible to make groundbreaking new discoveries on a subject that has been so acutely examined by so many brilliant minds over so many years?

"There are always things to find," enthuses the 59-year-old author. "It did surprise me that no one had looked at this film, and that no one before me had spoken to Antonia Fraser. But I have to say that I have an advantage that other people don't. I'm looking at just two days so I could drill down very, very deeply. People who are writing the story of a thousand days, which is the title of Arthur Schlesinger's history of the JFK presidency, can't look that deeply." ■

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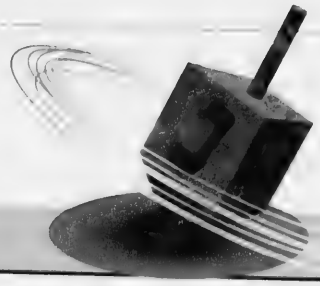
What's New

DEC. 18 - DEC. 25



by Lila Sarick

Saturday, Dec. 20

CHANUKAH PARTY

PJ Library and Temple Sinai hold a Chanukah/Havdalah party, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Sonshine and Broccoli perform for the younger children while older children can create a Chanukah song video. Register by Dec. 19. 416-487-4161.

Sunday, Dec. 21

CHANUKAH CONCERT

The Maccabeats perform at a Chanukah festival, 3 p.m. Chabad of Markham, $25. www.chabadmarkham.org or 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Wednesday, Dec. 24

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Why Judaism does not accept the Christian scriptures," 8:30 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 3600 Bathurst St. 416-789-0020.

Thursday, Dec. 25

HIJACKING THE TALMUD

Rabbi Yisroel Chaim Blumenthal presents a 3-part seminar on "Debunking missionary exploitation of rabbinic literature," 12:30-4:30 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. 416-789-0020.

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

HEBREW CLASSES

Conversational Hebrew, Ulpan method with **Yael Lev,** intermediates Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; advanced Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Two classes forming. Learn to read and write and Beginners conversational Hebrew. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

INTERNSHIPS

Emunah Toronto is offering two internship opportunities for university students who would like to work in a religious Zionist setting at Neve Michael, an Israeli children's village, starting June 2015. Call 416-636-0036 or www.emunahcanada.org

MACCABI CANADA

Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

MORASHA WINTER 2015

Classical music and the Jews, presented by **Jerry Fink.** Six classes on Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m., starting Jan. 7. Explore music for the Psalms, opera in the 19th century, music created in Terezin 1941-1944. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

HEBREW CLASSES

Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for adults. Beginners plus, runs Tuesdays, starting Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. Intermediate Hebrew uses prayers and biblical stories to further knowledge and conversation. Offered Thursdays, starting Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. Call 416-487-4161 or programs@templesinai.net.

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue begins its series of movies, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz.** Jan. 6, *Aftermath,* 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN

The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

Deadline reminders:

Deadlines will change due to the winter holidays. The CJN will not publish Jan. 1. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 15 is Jan. 5. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Menorahs in the making

Parent volunteers at Bialik Hebrew Day School's Ben and Edith Himel Education Centre help students in junior kindergarten roll and shape clay for homemade chanukiyot. From left, parent Marni W., students Gabe S. and Scarlett G., and parent Anat I.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- When you're about to separate: What to tell the kids, a workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m
- Parenting in the age of technology: Media personality **Joe Rich** hosts a workshop on parenting children and teens in a digital age. Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Mind-body connection for women: A 7-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Jan. 28, 1 p.m. or Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 5-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Starts Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play Pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah celebration with "Old Hollywood" live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Jan.14; Manicures and facials Jan. 8; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m., mah-jong.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 21, Klezmer Orchestra performs, 1:30 p.m.; Dec. 23, **Jordan Klapman** discusses "The life and music of George Gershwin," 10 a.m.; Dec. 30, **Jordan Klapman** discusses "The life and music of Irving Berlin," 10 a.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

◗ **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
◗ **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
◗ **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
◗ **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
◗ **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
◗ **Association of Jewish Seniors.** Chanukah lunch, Dec. 18, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $20/$25. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
◗ **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
◗ **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

◗ Beginner mah-jong starts Jan. 21, 1 p.m.
◗ Bridge level 1 and 2 starts Jan. 19.
◗ **Kevin Courrier** presents "Roads to perdition: the dark allure of film noir," Jan. 7-28, 1 p.m.
◗ The JCC book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 26, 1 p.m.
◗ **Leon Soriano** teaches "Acrylic painting," starting Jan. 13, 1:45 p.m.
◗ Hand-building and wheel-throwing ceramics classes during the day and evening start the week of Jan. 8.
◗ Yoga Cares is a program for teens and adults with an intellectual disability. Starts Jan. 6, 7 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
◗ Subscribe today to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January-December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
◗ Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. Full-year pro-rated registration available.
◗ **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Mondays, Jan. 5- Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
◗ *Holidays of the Week*, by **Yaara Eshet** is in the gallery until Dec. 28.
◗ Adult pottery classes for participants of all levels, start Jan. 6 at 9:30 a.m. or Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. Email pottery@mnjcc.org.
◗ Registration now open for Hebrew Institute. Various levels, open to everyone. Contact anniem@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
◗ iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/ Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

◗ Daytime and evening ceramics classes for all levels, starting Jan. 7.
◗ Enjoy a glass workshop creating a challah tray, with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
◗ Daytime and evening mah-jong classes start Jan. 13.
◗ **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Fundamentals of drawing and painting," starting Jan. 14, 10 a.m.
◗ PJ Plus is a parent and tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years, starting Jan. 21.
◗ Adult art with **Melysa Gorlicky** starts Jan. 5, 8 p.m.
◗ Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

SeeJN | Bingo fun

More than 120 kids from Chai Lifeline and the Downtown Kiwanis Club attended the Linitzer Benefit Society's 46th annual children's bingo event, held Nov. 16 at the National Council of Jewish Women's Toronto headquarters. Each child was guaranteed to win at least one donated toy, book or gift certificate to a local attraction. Pictured with some of the toys are volunteers Sandra Fiedler, left, and Renee Meadow.

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MARRIED WITH KIDS

The wedding speech

Lauren Kramer

If I'm ever inclined to slide my wedding video into the old dinosaur that is my trusty VHS, the idea of listening to the rabbi's speech is the fastest deterrent imaginable.

Delivered on a sweltering day in a synagogue with no air conditioning, the rabbi hired for the occasion droned on for 40 minutes in a long-winded soliloquy to which I doubt very much anyone really listened. As I fidgeted beneath the chupah in impractically high heels and many layers of silk and tulle, I remember thinking "Will this ever end?" Our trusty videographer determined he'd capture the entire monologue on video and save it for posterity – though why I cannot imagine. We didn't listen to it on our wedding day, and we certainly don't have any intention of reliving that speech 18 years later.

The rabbi was only doing what he thought was his job – marrying an ex-South African couple who'd flown back home for their wedding – by imparting the gravity of the wedding ceremony and the roles we would play as *chattan* and *kallah*. That he knew nothing about us was a fact that never entered the equation because that speech, I'm fairly certain, had been delivered at many other weddings in slightly different forms. It wasn't about the individuals standing beneath the chupah with love-struck eyes. It had something to do with the spirituality of man and woman uniting and each of their respective roles. I'm not sure of this, though, because as I said, I wasn't listening intently at the time.

Recently, though, I had cause to reflect on that speech and how different it might have been had today's bridal trends held sway back then. When a bridal magazine asked me to research wedding ceremonies and how they were changing, I came into contact with Michele Davidson, a wedding officiant with Modern Celebrant in Vancouver. She described the custom wedding ceremonies she creates for couples after she's come to know them over months of in-depth interviews that involve written reflections, face-to-face meetings and thought-provoking questions that prompt meaningful responses. Each ceremony is written from scratch for each couple, including material on the pair's story, what drew them together and what keeps them united.

In one ritual for the ceremony of a wine-loving couple, she instructed them to select a case of wine that would age well. Bride and groom were told to write one another letters wherein they reflected on their love for each other, and to seal those letters and place them in the wine case.

"They'll open it on a pre-specified anniversary date, or if their marriage runs into trouble before then," she told me. "At that time they'll share a glass of good wine, read the letters they wrote each other before their wedding and remember what drew them together."

Davidson's ceremonies are months in the making, and they're not cheap, "but each one is like a commissioned work of art," she says. "There's not a boring second in there."

Her words took me right back to the hot synagogue and the rabbi at my wedding, who had no idea who we were as individuals or what had drawn us together. He was just a man in a long black coat who'd been hired for the occasion and considered our ceremony a platform for his ideas of what a marriage should be.

"Often religious officiants have an agenda for the wedding and insist the couple fall under their agenda," one officiant said. "We believe the ceremony is about what our couples believe, and most of them want something soulful, spiritual and personal."

I'm not planning a second marriage, but if I ever renewed my vows, I'd choose an officiant like Davidson to create that ceremony in a heartbeat. I've sat through more than my share of rabbinical soliloquys, memorable only for their lengthy duration, speeches that are seldom "on my level." I'm certain I'm not alone. I think couples everywhere are ready for a fresh breeze that heralds a more innovative wedding ceremony, one that celebrates who they are as individuals, what values they share and how bright their future will be should their love and trust persist. If there's a rabbi who can deliver that, I'd love to meet him or her. ■

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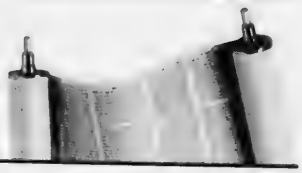
Parshah

Miketz | Genesis 41:1 - 44:17



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier argues we must be inspired by the women of Chanukah
Rabbi Denise Handlarski interprets Jacob's story as a reminder to feed the hungry
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen says when the world gets dark, Jews need to provide a light

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Recently, a friend said to me, "Aren't you lucky you don't have boys!" The context was a conversation about how elaborate and expensive bar mitzvahs have become and how, as the mother of four daughters, I wouldn't incur these expenses.

My friend's innocent comment reflected a reality of our communities: our ritual expectations and (subsequent) financial standards are different for boys and girls as we celebrate their spiritual and educational growth, in particular when it comes to bar and bat mitzvahs. Do we not want to encourage both our sons and our daughters to participate equally in Jewish ritual, study and communal life?

The Talmud states (Shabbat 23b): "A woman certainly lights [Chanukah candles], as Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Women are obligated concerning Chanukah candles, since they, too, were part of the miracle." Where are the women?

A fascinating story is found in the Talmud (Gittin 57b), which describes a woman whose seven sons are martyred before her eyes. We also read of Judith, who deftly beheads the Syrian-Greek general Holofernes. One woman demonstrates the strength of speaking up for her religion and not allowing its spirit to be defeated. The other courageously seduces her way to the enemy camp and demonstrates ingenuity and gutsiness. Additionally, the Book of Maccabees also describes women who took it upon themselves to ensure Jewish continuity at the risk of death by circumcising their sons. These stories teach us that women have been part of the Jewish story all along. They, too, cared about Judaism and stood up for their beliefs in physical and spiritual ways.

If we want our daughters to be proud, strong Jews who contribute in meaningful ways to our religious and communal life, let us be inspired by the women of Chanukah. We must ensure that our daughters – with the same sense of ceremony and importance that we reserve for our sons – are always an integral part of the story. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Joseph's brothers are suffering from famine and go to Egypt to ask for help. Joseph recognizes his brothers but they do not recognize him. Joseph sets up a test for his brothers, telling them to return with their youngest brother, Benjamin. Benjamin, replacing Joseph as Jacob's favourite son – for he is the last remaining son of Rachel as far as Jacob knows – did not accompany his brothers the first time.

Though Jacob is reticent to let him go for the second journey, he realizes they all may starve, and thus he consents. Consider the story from Jacob's point of view. He has lost his favourite son and now is threatened with the loss of another. While showing favouritism for a child is never a good parenting strategy, we can have some sympathy for Jacob in the choice he has to make. He either lets Benjamin go, or he risks starvation.

There is a midrash that speaks of Jacob's dilemma: "You may learn from the story of Jacob that it is a man's worst trial to have his children ask him for food when he has nothing to give." Hunger is devastating, and there is still far too much of it. Jacob reminds us of our responsibility to feed the hungry. The midrash about Jacob works nicely in conjunction with something Rashi noted about this portion. He makes the link between the word for corn/food in the Joseph story (*shever*) with the word for hope (*sever*). It's difficult to have hope without bread. This week we celebrate Chanukah, a time of joy and, for many of us, abundance. Let us, in gratitude and generosity, support food banks and soup kitchens. Let all of us work for a world in which both bread and hope are in abundance for all. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

Although on Chanukah we savour those delicious, crispy latkes, primarily, we celebrate by lighting the menorah. This is how we commemorate the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days. The victory of Chanukah was a victory of the spirit, so our observances are more "spiritual." The Greeks wanted us to forget the Torah and transgress the mitzvot, so we celebrate with an emphasis on the spiritual.

Chanukah is also related to the word *chinuch*, education. Chanukah is a time to focus on the educational needs of our children. We should provide them with a holy environment. According to Jewish law, under the circumstances, the Jews could have lit the menorah with impure oil. But they wanted the very best. So, too, must we offer our children the best Jewish education.

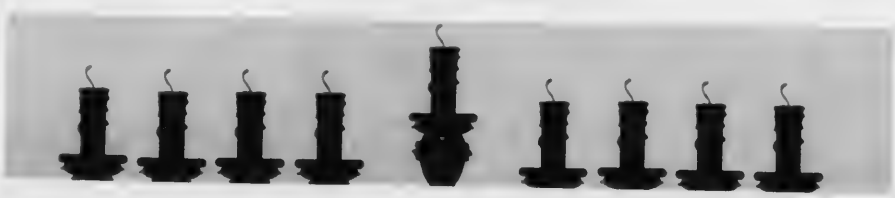
The Chanukah lights commemorate the menorah of the Temple. Yet there are major differences between them. In the Temple, the menorah was lit in the afternoon and on the inside, whereas the Chanukah candles are lit facing the street and after dark. This teaches that a Jew must not only light up his home, as with Shabbat candles, but must illuminate the "outside" – his social and business environment.

As the Lubavitcher Rebbe asked us to share the joy of Chanukah, my son and I have a custom to light a menorah with many of our neighbours on our street.

When it is "dark" outside, in exile or as we saw recently with the very dark events in Jerusalem and in Israel, we need to light up the world and be more unified, with more Torah and more mitzvot.

May we see the lighting of the Chanukah menorah in the third Temple with the Mashiach in our days. ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is rabbi of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto.



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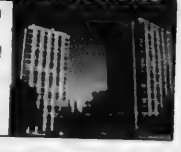

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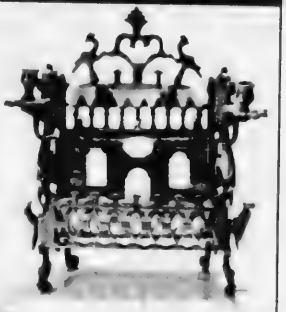

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 18, 2014

Arieh King: redeeming the Land of Israel

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Arieh King is a Jerusalem city councillor, director and founder of the Israel Land Fund (ILF) and one of the 10 original residents of the Ma'ale Zeitim neighbourhood on the Mount of Olives, where he lives with his wife and six children.

Through the ILF, King works to recover and preserve Jewish land in east Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. King is considered by some to be an expert on the Mount of Olives and aims to block illegal building in the area.

In advance of his Dec. 7 lecture at Chabad at Flamingo, King spoke to *The CJN* about the recent terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and the current security challenges in the capital, as well as his vision for the Holy City and how kidnap and assassination attempts are not enough to deter him from moving forward with that vision.

Arieh King, Jerusalem city councillor and founder of the Israel Land Fund

What are your ambitions regarding your work with the Israel Land Fund?

After working in the field of reclaiming and purchasing land from non-Jews in Israel since 1997, after nine years, I understood... what the Arabs were doing. They have a few funds and their goal is like that of the Jewish National Fund, to buy the land of Palestine for the Arab people, and they bring in... millions of dollars every year to buy land from Jews.

They are succeeding in the Galilee, in Jerusalem, succeeding in buying not just one house here and there – I'm talking about neighbourhoods.

[The ILF isn't doing] something new. We are just continuing what we have been doing for generations, which is buying the Land of Israel. Because we have a state, and a government, and police, so what was obvious to do before 1948, Jews stopped doing and now, Arabs are doing what Jews did before 1948.

> *I cannot accept that the government of Israel is freezing the building for Jews because they are Jews.*

What is the message you're bringing to Canada's Jewish community?

What's happened and still happening in Jerusalem in the last few months, [we must understand] how we got to this situation. During the election more than a year ago, I said then that what we are facing today was going to happen. It was part of my election campaign, that if Israel, and the municipality of Jerusalem, will not change its attitude to east Jerusalem, we will face a terrible security situation, which is exactly what we are facing in this wave [of terrorism]. We are not over it.

The main thing is that Israel does not enforce the laws in east Jerusalem. This is where everything started. You cannot expect any human being that you are educating for years that he can build illegally whenever he wants, he can drive without a license, whenever and wherever he wants, he can steal electricity, he can steal water, he can not pay taxes, and this is today the situation and the reality in east Jerusalem.

What can we expect from a child who grows up to be 18 years old who was in a school where the government sponsors schools where teachers are teaching him that there is no State of Israel, it is one place called Palestine? And how can we expect from these Arabs not to throw stones on the people who stole their land, according to what is being taught at a school that we are sponsoring?

The main issue is that the government of Israel and the municipality needs... to enforce the law. I'm talking about every law – parking, driving, taxes – every law.

Most of the Arabs in east Jerusalem, if you will ask them one on one, they will tell you that it would be a nightmare for them for their neighbourhood to become part of the Palestinian Authority.... Instead of strengthening these Arabs who think like that, by not enforcing the laws, we are allowing the anti-Israeli powers to become stronger.

Your own home was the subject of an attack?

Two and a half months ago, there was an attempt to assassinate me, to kill me. They shot [at my home], but I didn't notice it, because it was during an evening that they fired firecrackers.

The morning after this attack, my wife went to do laundry, and she went to the laundry machine and she found bullet holes and the bullets on the floor. Then we understood that the firecrackers were a cover for someone. I was standing on the balcony during the firecrackers, but thank God, they didn't [shoot me].

Aren't you scared?

Of course I am. In 1999, there was an attempt to kidnap me in a neighbourhood called Abu Dis in east Jerusalem.

I got a report from a resident from Ma'ale Adumim... that he saw Palestinian police in uniform and with weapons in a part of Jerusalem, so I went there... with a video camera, and I saw 26 policemen, walking... in Jerusalem... so I convinced [a government] minister to come, and with them came the media, and they saw that the Arabs were inside Jerusalem, so the army came and took six of them out, but I said, I have video of 26 of them, why are you only taking six out?

I went looking for them, and when I found them, they gathered around my car... They broke into the car, and they asked me to come out. They wanted to take me to Jericho, so what I did was took their officer hostage, and I had my own pistol.

I took him in my car, and I had my pistol to his head, and they were surrounding my car, and after 45 minutes... a Palestinian policeman, who was involved in removing the six other policemen told them to leave... I told him I would take the guy who was in my car until I got to a curve in the road where he could not see me, and that's what happened.

Since then, I've been much more aware about what is happening. When we found the bullets in my house and when they attempted to assassinate [my friend and colleague Rabbi] Yehuda Glick, so I'm much more aware. I need to check my car every day... and do things that the police gave me instructions to do.

This doesn't deter you?

I cannot allow myself [to be deterred], until the government or the municipality of Jerusalem will not take it as their own project, to do what I'm doing, redeeming the land. There is no other choice. Of course, you need to be careful. I do not go into Arab areas like I did before. Now I'm taking more steps to secure myself.

What is your vision for Jerusalem in the next 10 years?

I want to see that there will be no difference between east and west Jerusalem – meaning, the same freedom of movement that Jews have in west Jerusalem and the same freedom of movement that Arabs in west Jerusalem, I want to see Jews have in east Jerusalem. I want to see the same rights that the Arabs have, I want to see the Jews have.

I cannot accept that the government of Israel is freezing the building for Jews because they are Jews. There are areas in Jerusalem... where Arabs can submit plans and build, but Jews cannot. Jews who are living in the United States, in Canada, cannot build because they are Jews.

If you ask what my vision is... the development, the road development, light infrastructure, sewage, electricity – everything will be equal in the east and the west. This is my vision. ■

Let your heart be contrite

Backstory

JONATHAN L. MILEVSKY

As the holiday season approaches, one can already hear the predictable fever pitch of pundits on both sides of the "war on Christmas." Jews are often caught in the middle of the Scylla and Charybdis of this struggle.

On the one hand, for the sake of *darchei shalom*, the ways of peace, we accept it if Chanukah gets pushed to the sidelines, but there is also a required element of *pirsumei nisah*, the promulgating of the miracle, which is lost as a result.

On the other hand, we don't want to be too forceful in promoting the holiday. We are aware of the resentment that can come from this type of approach. What is needed, then, is some common ground that represents a way out of this struggle.

Surprisingly, the common ground is the call to repentance at this time of year, found in the intellectual history of both religious traditions.

In chassidic thought, this is a very strong theme. Chanukah is seen as an extension of the High Holidays and the time when our fates are finally sealed. It is seen as a time for renewal, a concept that connects to the new month that comes during the holiday and the midrashic idea that the placing of the month was one of the points to which the Greeks objected, and it is perceived as a time that hints at God's forgiveness.

These ideas are found in the literature of the Lubavitch, Sanz and Karlin dynasties, among others. The idea is also found in Moses Chaim Luzzatto's *Way of God*, in which he calls the Hasmonean victory a "return" to Torah and worship. Moreover, the link to forgiveness can be seen in Rabbi Shlomo Yitshaki's prayer book. There, Rashi explains that the reason the portion read in synagogue on Chanukah relates to the gifts of the princes is that it was the commandment to build the Tabernacle that assured Moses he was forgiven (according to several midrashim, the Tabernacle was complete on the 25th day of Kislev, the first day of Chanukah, but was only consecrated at the beginning of Nisan.)

Perhaps underlying this link to forgiveness is the slight element of solemnity on Chanukah. Unlike the festival of Purim, there were no festive meals instituted on Chanukah. For this reason, Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (13th century) says meals that celebrate Chanukah do not have the status of a seudat mitzvah, a meal that celebrates the fulfilment of a commandment. This idea is echoed by Rabbi Mordechai Yaffeh (16th century), who says that, unlike Purim, Jewish lives were not in danger during Chanukah. The only threat was that Jews would turn away from their faith, and their military success prevented that from happening. Thus, the holiday is one that commemorates the Hasmoneans' submission to God.

The idea of forgiveness is also found in relation to the Christmas season. For example, as American author B.D. Forbes has noted, the Puritan English Parliament in 1644 declared the holiday a day of penance instead of a feast day. Dietrich Bonhoffer, a German theologian at the turn of the 20th century, repeats this idea and says Christmas is a time for repentance, not rejoicing. Moreover, German author Christoph Dohmen suggests that there is even a similarity between the liturgy of Christmas and that of Yom Kippur.

In an interesting conceptual parallel, the call for repentance comes against a backdrop of a recognition of the seriousness of the holiday. Pope Leo (fifth century) saw the holiday as a time for reflection, not for "dull carnal joy." Indeed, even gift-giving could be seen in this context. As American management Prof. Jean M. Bartunek and student Boram Do demonstrate, framing the consumerism of the holiday as profane is a misrepresentation. Bartunek and Do say the practice of gift-giving was originally associated with charity, a way of thinking about those who are less fortunate, and that it had the benefit of preventing rowdiness by keeping people off the streets.

Now, I am not saying either holiday should be celebrated any differently than it has been, nor am I promoting syncretism. All I am saying is that there is a basis for common ground, and that should be emphasized at this time of year. ■

Jonathan L. Milevsky is a PhD candidate at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Papoff, Ruth Elaine	Nov.1, 2014	5 Emerald Lane
Watkin, Sarah Renee	Nov. 2, 2014	88 Carl Tennan St
Springer, Henry	Nov. 3, 2014	219 Honiton St
Karpov, Ninel	Nov. 3, 2014	Private
Pekar, Yakov	Nov. 3, 2014	3 Goldfinch Crt
Altman, Gerald	Nov. 4, 2014	4001 Bayview Ave
Gordon, Minnie	Nov. 4, 2014	307 Woodbrook Mews SW
Mandel, Howard Ian	Nov. 5, 2014	135 Antibes Dr
Guttman, Izzie	Nov. 6, 2014	Private
Hecker, Henry Robert	Nov. 6, 2014	7 Gale Cres
Yanofsky, Abert	Nov. 6, 2014	90 Fisherville Rd.
Goldmacher, Clare	Nov. 7, 2014	11 Townsgate Dr
Meyers, Stanley	Nov. 7, 2014	Private
Drillick, Marion	Nov. 7, 2014	Private
Gelb, Terezia	Nov. 8, 2014	Private
Kaushansky, Chaya Mushka	Nov. 8, 2014	18 Mortimer Crt
Polson, Daully	Nov. 8, 2014	25 Brunswick Ave
Walton, Dorothy	Nov. 8, 2014	120 Promenade Circle
Rypina, Nina	Nov. 9, 2014	Private
Teyer, Icheskal	Nov. 9, 2014	7601 Bathurst St
Hellinger, Irena	Nov. 9, 2014	110 Promenade Circle
Erdman, George	Nov. 10, 2014	Private
Press, Lyudmyla	Nov. 10, 2014	850 Steeles Ave W
Ashkenazi, Bronislava	Nov. 10, 2014	Private
Shmucklerovich, Ella	Nov. 11, 2014	20 Shalom Aleichem Crt
Lew, Magdalena	Nov.11, 2014	3560 Bathurst St.
Kreidstein, Morris	Nov. 11, 2014	2 Neptune Ave
Rosen, Sylvia	Nov. 12, 2014	351 Christie St
Nathan, Doreen Ethel	Nov. 12, 2014	11 Berg Crt
Ostfeld, Esther	Nov. 12, 2014	3560 Bathurst St
Sherman, Harry (Hush)	Nov. 12, 2014	484 Steeles Ave W
Handelsman, Rudy	Nov. 13, 2014	100 Promenade Circle
Zilberman, Siyoma	Nov. 14, 2014	1101 Steeles Ave W
Bentolila, Isaac	Nov. 14, 2014	44 Dawlish Ave
Pearson, Marjory	Nov. 14, 2014	53 Limcombe Dr.
Wasser, Louis	Nov. 14, 2014	866 Sheppard Ave W.
Ginzburg, David	Nov. 14, 2014	19 Millcreek Cres
Nahimovich, Israel	Nov. 14, 2014	25 Marshal St
Nurik, Gitel Feiga	Nov. 15, 2014	50 Disera Dr
Elfan, Phyllis	Nov. 16, 2014	3303 Don Mills Rd
Bercovici, Henrietta	Nov. 17, 2014	3560 Bathurst St.
Bubis, Solomon	Nov. 17, 2014	120 Promenade Circle
Hoffman, Izak	Nov. 18, 2014	429 Walmer Rd
Tylbor, Louise Dorothee	Nov. 19, 2014	546 Steeles Ave W.
Tsekhman, Leah	Nov. 23, 2014	2 Covington Rd
Goldberger, Arye	Nov. 24, 2014	343 Clark Ave W
Biberberg, Thomas	Nov. 24, 2014	1 Cordoba Dr
Mizrahi, Shoshana	Nov. 25, 2014	6101 Bathurst St
Kuritski, Ella	Nov. 26, 2014	Private
Eisenstein, William Zev	Nov. 26, 2014	128 Cline Ave S.
Schwarzman, Yoram	Nov. 26, 2014	Private

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Carolyn Feldstein	Nov 28/14	3800 Yonge Street
Lola Akerman	Nov 27/14	30 Granite Street
Jerry Van	Nov 25/14	1166 Bay Street
Tikvah Weis	Dec 1/14	22 Coreydale Court
Sydney Jacobs	Nov 29/14	355 St. Clair Ave. West
Leon Kaminsky	Nov 30/14	10 Torresdale Avenue
Fanny Altro	Dec 1/14	205 Cummer Avenue
Dolores Haber	Dec 2/14	660 Sheppard Ave. E.
Joyce Leone Lieberman	Dec 2/14	484 Steeles Ave. W.
Israel Greenberg	Dec 2/14	6200 Bathurst Street
Max Milstone	Dec 2/14	10 Tichester Road
Goldie Rotman	Dec 3/14	484 Steeles Ave. W.
Izak Eisenberg	Dec 4/14	2 Covington Road
Reva Krongold-Parlow	Dec 4/14	38 Avenue Road
Jack Weinbaum	Dec 5/14	5 Madoc Drive
Esther Pollock	Dec 5/14	105-1131 Steeles Ave. W.
Joyce Charendoff	Dec 6/14	147 Elder Street

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Inside

Harper celebrates Chanukah
The prime minister and his wife Laureen light the menorah in Montreal.
PAGE 12

Remembering a mensch
Hamilton educator Rabbi Zev Eisenstein recalled for his acts of kindness. **PAGE 13**

NOTE TO READERS:
The CJN will not be publishing on Jan. 1. **Our next issue is Jan. 8.**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:21 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Montreal	3:58 p.m.	5:08 p.m.
Toronto	4:28 p.m.	5:36 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:14 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Calgary	4:16 p.m.	5:34 p.m.
Vancouver	4:01 p.m.	5:16 p.m.

Everything old is new again

The biblical epic comes full circle as Moses returns to the silver screen. But where's the Jewish content? **PAGES 8 and 30**

Can't we all just get along?

In Vancouver, where rabbis from all denominations work together, the answer is yes. **PAGE 14**

Canada looks to Israel on oil sands

Industry group hopes to tap Jewish state's know-how. **PAGE 17**

Home for the Halaladays

A Jewish comic and a Muslim comic walk into a bar at Christmas and... **PAGE 27**

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Mensch in a shark tank, and Rowling confirms student wizard is Jewish

Definitely not a Catholic elf

Neal Hoffman, the former Hasbro executive behind Mensch on a Bench, Chanukah's answer to the Christmas-themed Elf on a Shelf, appeared on ABC's reality show *Shark Tank* Dec. 12, seeking financing for his two year-old venture. The Cincinnati entrepreneur, who brought along a life-sized version of his doll, Moshe the Mensch, got $150,000 for 15 per cent of his company from Lori Greiner and Canadian Robert Herjavec. He rejected an offer from Barbara Corcoran of $150,000 for 20 per cent, who wanted to redesign Moshe and rewrite his accompanying book. "By the time Barbara's finished, the Mensch is gonna be Catholic," fellow Canadian shark Kevin O'Leary joked.

In case you thought he was Hindu...

J.K. Rowling has confirmed that one of Harry Potter's classmates in her famed series is Jewish. "Anthony Goldstein, Ravenclaw, Jewish wizard," the novelist said Dec. 16 on Twitter, responding to a query as to whether there were Jews at Hogwarts, the fictional wizard school. Ravenclaw is one of four houses at Hogwarts. Fans of the series had speculated that Goldstein, who fights alongside Harry Potter as part of "Dumbledore's Army," was of Jewish origin, but Rowling's tweet was the first confirmation.

Robert Herjavec with his new friend
FACEBOOK PHOTO

Dieudonné makes nice with Jews?

French comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, who has multiple convictions for inciting racial hatred against Jews, wants to meet with representatives of France's Jewish community. In an open letter earlier this month, his lawyers asked Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and Gilles Clavreul, France's interministerial delegate for the fight against anti-Semitism, to organize the meeting. It's necessary, the lawyers wrote, to "determine the terms of an accord which would allow both parties to respect the other." CRIF, the French Jewish umbrella group, did not immediately issue a public reaction to the letter. Many consider Dieudonné a symbol of France's growing anti-Semitism problem because of his performances and creation of the quenelle, a Nazi-like salute. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

6,655

The number of French Jews who made aliyah in the first 11 months of 2014, more than double last year's record of 3,293, and more than the 5,105 olim so far this year from war-torn Ukraine.

61.7%

Israelis who say there's a crisis in U.S.-Israel relations, according to a new poll by the liberal U.S. pro-Israel advocacy group J Street.

Quotable

You can't be neutral about your own destiny.

— Uri Dromi, founder and director of the Jerusalem Press Club. Full interview on p. 38.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz talks challah, the Jewish comfort food.

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Letters to the Editor

Judaism and the right to die

Dr. Hershl Berman wrote (Letters, Dec. 11) that opiate use does not shorten life. I concur completely.

All of those who are familiar with such use can attest to the fact that when used properly and carefully, opiates can provide much needed relief of pain and suffering and provide compassionate comfort without compromising life expectancy, which may be curtailed as part of the illness, but not because of the treatment.

Dr. Michael Gordon
Medical Program Director, Palliative Care, Baycrest Health Sciences, Toronto

Seeking millennials

In Rabbi2Rabbi, the topic was, "How can shuls reach millennials?" (Dec. 11). I think a more interesting question is where are the millennials?

Many Jews intermarry or simply assimilate and remove themselves from the Jewish community. This is well known and often spoken about. What is less often mentioned is the low birth rate among non-Orthodox Jews. The Pew report on Jewish Americans states that non-Orthodox Jews have only 1.7 children per adult. That low birthrate alone guarantees the disappearance of non-Orthodox congregations. Shuls cannot reach millennials who were never born.

Abe Margel
Thornhill, Ont.

Rescue vs collaboration

The title of Gaylen Ross' article ("When rescue is not collaboration," Dec. 4) is misleading. The so-called rescue of Transylvanian Jews attributed to Reszo Kasztner is a misrepresentation of historical facts as I personally know them. As a child growing up in Israel my grandfather, Yechiel Shmueli, told me what happened in Kluj in May 1944.

Before the Jews of Kluj were herded into the brick factory, which was used as the ghetto on the way to Auschwitz, they were told by Kasztner, who knew their true destination, that, "We were being taken to Kenyermeze to work... Brothers, you should know that the Hungarian authorities have decided to empty Kenyermeze of its population, and all the Jews of Hungary are going to be placed there until the end of the war." This in fact was the testimony my grandfather gave at the trial of Malchiel Gruenwald in Jerusalem in 1953, when Kasztner had charged Gruenwald with libel.

"Kenyermeze" was a mythical place meaning in Hungarian "meadow of bread." This explanation lulled the Jews of Transylvania to believe that they would be safe if they got on the trains. If Kasztner really believed this then why did he have to spirit his friends and family out to Switzerland following his agreement with the Nazis? It is obvious that he was willing to lull the Jewish community into co-operating with their murderers in order to save those for whom he cared or who could afford it. Some argue that had the Jews been told the truth, many could have been saved as the border between Hungarian-controlled territory and Romanian-held territory was relatively open and they could have simply walked the 20 kilometres to safety.

Nobody can offer a redeeming answer as to why Kasztner testified in the defence of SS officer, Kurt Becher, at the Nuremberg trials. There is little doubt that the recent attempts at rehabilitating Kasztner's reputation are directly due to the fact that his granddaughter, Merav Michaeli, became a member of the Israeli Knesset and used that influence to mobilize a revision of history through books and movies. Sadly, Jews are aware of the use of historical revisionism as a tool of the enemies of Israel. Here it is merely a tool to sanitize a figure who may not have been a villain, but may have facilitated the murder of thousands of innocents through his self-serving, misleading actions 70 years ago.

Steve Samuel
Toronto

Jews playing hockey

Jay Teitel's wonderfully written story, "The rabbi who wouldn't backcheck" (Dec. 11) was a joy to read. Combining any aspect of religious Jewish life with hockey is no easy task, but the author accomplished this effortlessly with grace and humour.

My only question is, now that Rabbi Kalbfleisch is gone, does that mean a space has opened up in your hockey game?

Barry Lubotta
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.* **For more letters, please see www.cjnews.com.**

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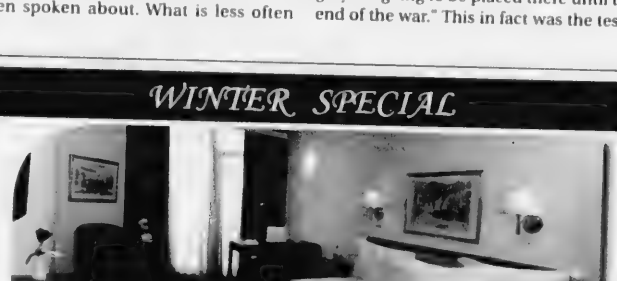

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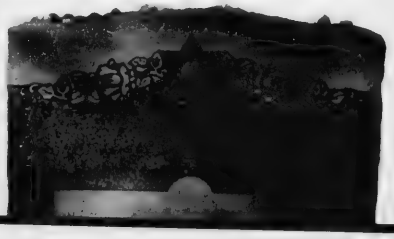

RABBI·2·RABBI

Bringing our values to the table

What does it mean to say food is kosher when the animals that give us nourishment are raised as commodities with little concern for their welfare as living creatures?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Korobkin: Over this past Sukkot, I started a conversation in our shul that resonated with some and left others scratching their heads. It's the topic of "factory farming" – the concern that a large part of our protein food supply, throughout North America, is coming from animals that are raised under factory conditions.

Instead of cows being allowed to graze, they are penned up in extremely confined spaces. Hens are boosted with hormones in order to mature faster and produce more eggs. Today, animals that provide us with food – either through their meat, or from their milk or eggs – are raised as commodities with little concern for their welfare as living creatures.

How should we in the Jewish community react to this reality?

Rabbi Grushcow: I think it's a real issue. What does it mean to say food is kosher when it is produced in such environments?

We need to be concerned about the welfare of the animals, and of the people working in these environments as well. Good work is being done on developing kashrut certification that takes ethics into account, but it's not yet widely available. I look forward to the day when I won't have to choose between kosher and organic meat. Kashrut is a primary value for me, but I have concerns about what's under the label.

Meanwhile, there are things we can do. There's a great book called *The Sacred Table*, which looks at food from a liberal Jewish perspective, and can spark communal conversations on the topic, or even just help us figure out our own choices. Also, our synagogue has become a pick-up location for Lufa Farms, a sustainable source of produce. It's a small step, but offers one way of broadening the conversation about food beyond the question of kashrut.

Rabbi Korobkin: Hold on. We both agree that the moral and ethical treatment of animals, and the workers who deal with animals, is important to us as Jews, and that's why I raised the issue. But to conflate the issues of kashrut and ethical behaviour is, I believe, a mistake.

By expanding the meaning of "kosher" to include anything that conforms to the cause célèbre of the day, you end up eventually diluting it into nothingness. The Torah prescribes the kosher laws for reasons that are largely metaphysical. While keeping kosher, we also should observe the mitzvah of *tza'ar baalei chayim*, treating animals with kindness and compassion and not inflicting gratuitous pain upon them.

But it shouldn't be confused with kashrut. After all, milk and eggs don't need to be certified kosher, but the cows and hens that produce them need to be cared for properly.

Rabbi Grushcow: Absolutely, something can be technically kosher without any ethical standards at all. Ethics and holiness are separate categories that do not always overlap. But this brings us to the fundamental question of the purpose of kashrut.

For millennia, our commentators have debated whether we observe kashrut simply because it is commanded by God or whether there is a meaning behind each of the laws. Philo, for example, a Jewish philosopher in the first century CE, developed a series of interpretations that explained why some animals were forbidden, based on the idea that we wouldn't want to ingest their qualities.

Both these positions are valid. But we have to remember that many Jews do not follow kashrut at all, most likely because the practice holds no meaning for them. Why not, then, follow the voices from our tradition that look to find meaning in what we eat and don't eat? Rather than diluting the practice of kashrut, this deepens it.

It seems to me that at the essence of kashrut is the claim that God cares about what we eat, that what we put into our bodies matters. Should this not include our ethical concerns?

An honest Jewish conversation about the food we eat has to go beyond the categories of what is permitted and what is forbidden. Our sages taught that the home is a *mikdash me'at*, a miniature sanctuary, and our tables should be as holy as the altar. I think you started an important conversation. Let's bring our values to the table. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Chanukah Concert

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

The North African Youth Group performs at the JIAS Chanukah Concert in Montreal, circa 1974.

SeeJN | Holiday gathering

Some 250 people came out Dec. 16 to Mel Lastman Square to enjoy Chanukah food and skating, as well as to witness the lighting of a 13-foot chanukiyah at the Jewish Russian Community Centre's 28th annual public menorah lighting. Pictured, from left, are Thornhill MP Peter Kent, Deputy Mayor of Vaughan Michael Dibiase, York Centre MP Mark Adler, Richmond Hill MPP Reza Moridi, JRCC senior rabbi Yoseph Zaltzman, Willowadale MPP David Zimmer, Toronto Mayor, John Tory, Richmond Hill MP Costas Menagakis and JRCC director Rabbi Mendel Zaltzman.

From Yoni's Desk

This is just the beginning

It's been a whirlwind of a year at *The CJN*. In January, this newspaper turned over a new leaf, and in April we introduced a brand new design. Our aim from the outset has been to offer readers an engaging, informative and at times challenging portrait of Canadian Jewry.

When we undertook the project of revitalizing *The CJN*, one of the promises we made to readers was that we wouldn't shy away from touchy subjects. During the past 12 months, I think we lived up to that commitment. From tackling issues such as poverty and conversion to wide-ranging discussions about Israel and even our own federal politics, we have showcased the array of opinions in our community.

At the same time, we try to go about our work with sensitivity, because, at the end of the day, our aim is to help find solutions, not simply mete out accusations. Sometimes there are no easy answers, but at least then we're talking – and hopefully that brings us closer together.

On a personal note, this year has been a real education for me. I grew up in the Canadian Jewish community, went to Canadian Jewish schools and spent my summers at Canadian Jewish camps – I thought I knew the Jewish community pretty well. But the truth is I had no idea of the breadth and scope of Jewish life across this country.

Over the past 12 months, I've met and spoken to so many Canadians who are devoting their lives to Jewish communities. Their dedication is inspiring. Collectively, we may have our gripes about various Canadian Jewish institutions or organizations – and some of them are very worthy of consideration. But we should not doubt the level of commitment to fostering Jewish life across Canada, even while acknowledging that there's plenty of work still to do.

The Jewish community is a living, breathing body. Change is inevitable – that's what makes our stories so compelling. *The CJN* changed a lot in the last year, too, and we promise to keep changing in the coming one. That includes new features and writers, a focus on community engagement beyond the printed page, and a fresh cjnews.com. Our work is only just beginning.

As we bid farewell to 2014, I'd like to acknowledge a few people – first and foremost my wife, Alexandra, and my family for their support. *The CJN's* board of directors has guided this newspaper in a positive direction, and positioned it to remain a community institution for years to come. Our many contributors offered a broad range of perspectives and ideas. And at *The CJN's* offices in Toronto and Montreal, the staff has been a model of grace under pressure. Without them, there would be no *CJN*.

Finally, I'd like to thank our readers. You welcome us into your homes each week, and that is an honour we don't take for granted – because, ultimately, *The CJN* is about you. This is a vibrant Jewish community, and in 2014 we proved how strong, innovative and caring we can be. I don't doubt the coming year will prove it again, in all kinds of new and interesting ways. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Confronting our own prejudices

A Jewish politician reflects on being mistaken for a Muslim

Dyanoosh Youssefi

"Youssefi, that's a nice Muslim name," he said, with a skeptical look at my campaign flyer. It was mid-spring. I was canvassing as a candidate in the recent Toronto municipal election. This resident (let's call him Alan) and I had had a long chat already, but it was clear that something was bothering him – and that something was not my position on municipal issues. It was my name.

I didn't correct Alan's misperception right away. He had already told me that he was Jewish, but I didn't immediately tell him that I, too, am Jewish.

I struggled with what the right response would be in these circumstances. I didn't want religion or ethnicity to matter. I wished for voters like Alan to judge and support me based on my professional and community service and on my approach to municipal issues. I didn't want people to hold a candidate's religion against them, simply because that person is Muslim. I also knew that some voters would not give me a fair chance if they thought I was Muslim.

Canvassing was a fantastic, enjoyable and positive experience overall. Many residents were not only interested and engaged, they were also welcoming, even grateful that I was running. I felt heartened and grateful for their support and for our ultimate performance. However, because of my name – I am Iranian-Jewish-Canadian and it has its roots in Zoroastrianism – I also ran into or heard about voters, particularly Jewish ones, who assumed that I was Muslim and who, based on that assumption, either dismissed me outright or approached me with great caution, holding back, even if we completely agreed on the issues and on how to improve municipal politics and the city.

Some residents asked me directly or indirectly about my background. And over and over, their attitude and expression changed once they found out that I am Jewish and not Muslim. They became at ease and warm. For some, this reaction may have reflected their joy in making another connection with me, for others, it was clearly relief that I was not Muslim.

As for Alan, I did eventually let him know that I am Jewish, at which point his countenance changed. Soon after, he apologized. "Please pardon my cold reception of you earlier," he said.

Not all Jewish residents who thought I was Muslim regarded me in a reserved or suspicious manner. And I want to be clear that some Muslim voters are also prejudiced against Jewish candidates, just as some non-Jewish voters are prejudiced against Muslims.

However, given the demographics of Toronto's Ward 16 (Eglinton-Lawrence), where I ran for city council, I more often experienced the doubt and suspicion of Jewish voters in relation to Muslims.

There was even a Jewish man who wanted to see another candidate win, and who, when talking about me to others, apparently referred to me disparagingly as "the Muslim lefty" – a description which he clearly felt would act as a double whammy against me.

I believe that these occurrences illuminate an underlying problem that we Jews need to address. That is, Jewish resistance to Muslim candidates – a resistance that could result in our dismissing highly qualified persons that could serve us well.

I understand why many Jews would be suspicious of a Muslim representative in government. I grew up in Iran until the age of 11. I am aware of the deep roots of anti-Semitism in many Islamic societies. I have observed how often anti-Israel and anti-Semitic feelings are conflated. And I am well-aware that Israel is subjected to a double-standard when it comes to the scrutiny and criticism of its actions. I know that many Jews fear that a Muslim person in government may be unfriendly to Jews or go even further and work against Jewish concerns and causes.

But do we Jews have our own prejudices to confront? Are our votes informed and guided by prejudice? Do our fears of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel candidates push us to act in a manner that is, at best, uninformed, and at worst racist? Does our own intolerance prevent us from judging and choosing candidates based on their qualifications, skills, values, vision and integrity? If we dismiss these candidates outright, and never bother to find out about their positions on domestic political issues, let alone their attitude toward Jews and Israel, are we not ultimately harming democracy and hurting ourselves?

The Muslim population in our country is growing. Our civic and political interactions will bring us into greater contact with Muslims of all backgrounds. Increasingly, there will be Muslim candidates running for office at all levels of government in Canada. And many will represent Jews in government.

We can treat this reality as a threat against which we have to brace ourselves, or we can seek the opportunity to reach out, find those candidates who will serve our city and country well, who will represent us fairly, and who are also open to improving understanding and dialogue between Jews and Muslims.

Dyanoosh Youssefi at a campaign fundraiser

If we act on our fears and dismiss these candidates outright, then we will exacerbate the distance and distrust that already exists between us. If we don't attempt to create meaningful connections, to build dialogue, and to collaborate on common objectives, then we will further polarize our communities.

Reaching out, building bridges, and overcoming our own prejudices: they are required of us by our humanity, by our ethical values and morals, by our history, and, arguably, by our religion and traditions. What's more, they are also required for our own self-preservation.

If we fail to build these bridges, we will all lose. ■

Dyanoosh Youssefi is a former criminal defence lawyer and legal studies professor. She can be found on Twitter at @DyanooshY.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

The return of the biblical epic

SHLOMO SCHWARTZBERG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The recent release of Ridley Scott's *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, based on the Hebrew Bible tale of Moses and the exodus from Egypt, combined with Hollywood's release earlier this year of Darren Aronofsky's *Noah*, suggests that biblical epics are back. (Scott is reportedly also planning a movie on King David, and a new version of *Ben-Hur* is coming out in Februaary.)

Or perhaps they never left. Indeed, since the beginning of cinema, the Old and New Testaments have been fodder for any number of movies, though the particulars of how they've been portrayed have changed dramatically.

Among silent cinema's most popular (and expensive) films were early versions of *The Ten Commandments* (1923) and *Noah's Ark* (1928), as well as the biblically related *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1926), proving that in Hollywood, everything old is new again. In one respect, these movies were easy to make, as the film rights were in the public domain – and thus posed no copyright issues. Plus, most of the potential audiences for the movies knew the stories already. Besides, the Bible – or at least the Hebrew Bible – is chock full of drama, emotion, love stories and moral conundrums that are perfect subject matter for films.

Russell Crowe in *Noah*, left, and Charlton Heston in the 1959 version of *Ben-Hur*.

Biblical epics also offered something tailor made for cinema: larger than life adventures with commanding characters and a wide backdrop against which to situate the stories. Best of all, and especially after severe censorship came into effect in the 1930s in Hollywood with The Hays Code, they were seen by many as thematically safe in their (supposed) avoidance of controversial subject matter. That's not entirely true – adultery, incest and patricide are some biblical themes – but the Bible, at least in the West, has for the most part been seen as innocuous to most people, would-be censors included.

That didn't stop subversive screenwriters and directors from slipping stuff past the censors. There was no shortage of nudity in both versions of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*, though he got away with much more in the (pre-code) 1923 version than in its better-known 1956 followup, which was comparatively tamer. And how does one read Stanley Kubrick's 1960 epic *Spartacus* – not strictly a biblical epic but in its feel and scope akin to one – which was penned by blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo and based on the book by Howard Fast, also a blacklisted Hollywood figure?

The famous "I am Spartacus" scene directed at the Roman authorities, with each slave pretending to be the man so as to thwart their attempt to single out Spartacus, can easily be discerned as a call to unite in arms against the villains, i.e., the House Un-American Activities Committee, which prosecuted Trumbo and Fast for their alleged Communist sympathies.

And then there was the openly gay scene in *Spartacus* (between Tony Curtis' and Laurence Olivier's characters) and the inserted gay subtext in the 1959 *Ben-Hur* (by screenwriter Gore Vidal) that suggested a past homosexual relationship between Jewish scion Judah Ben-Hur (Charlton Heston) and his childhood Roman friend Messala (Stephen Boyd).

By the 1950s, Americans were glued to their TVs, and biblical epics like *Ben-Hur*, *Quo Vadis* (1951), *The Robe* (1953), *The Ten Commandments* and others were just about the only movies that could get Americans out of the house. Often shot in CinemaScope, those movies were bigger, more lavish and more exciting than anything TV could offer and also provided a refuge for blacklisted writers like Trumbo to work in.

Lost in all this, of course, were the Jewish underpinnings of the Old Testament film adaptations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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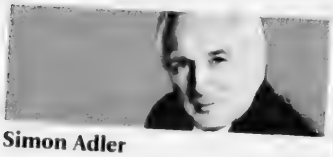
In the heart of Bloor-Yorkville

Diaspora Jews shouldn't try to influence the Israeli election



Simon Adler

Diaspora Jews often want to tell Israelis how to vote – and how, more generally, to run their country. After all, as Jews, we feel we have a stake in what happens in Israel, and many of us feel comfortable offering our opinions of what should happen there.

While people should be encouraged to voice their opinions, there's no corresponding obligation requiring Israelis to pay even the slightest attention. Indeed, for very good reasons, they should not. We in the Diaspora should be happy if our telling Israelis what to do is met with polite indifference. But we should also be prepared for withering scorn.

We might get information via the news media (usually incomplete and biased) on some issues affecting the upcoming Israeli election. Our interest is typically piqued by the "sexy" ones such as security and conversions. But given that we don't live there, we may possess little or no information about many other important issues. And while democracy is based on "the right to be wrong," we should remember that we won't have to pay the price for an error – only Israelis will.

There's a whole other world of important issues in the upcoming Israeli election, such as "social welfare," internal aspects of the economy, health care, income support programs, and many more. Many Diaspora Jews have little interest in, or understanding of, these issues. We require far more information than we can ever assimilate from the outside. Only living in Israel can bring home the reality of the needs, wants and possible solutions to be considered in the social-welfare sphere.

Many Israelis will be making their election decisions based on information from the media, just as we might. However, they also live in Israel and absorb its realities directly. Given that we cannot share the risks of a mistake (i.e., electing the "wrong" government), it is impertinent for us to suggest how Israelis should vote and what government they should elect. The most we're entitled to do is encourage fair, respectful and honest discourse in the election process – something that is as needed and as rare here in Canada as it is in Israel.

It's also incumbent on Diaspora Jews to remember that Israel employs a governmental system that is radically different from the British, Canadian and American systems. We sometimes look down on the Israeli approach to electoral politics as chaotic and unworkable. But the truth is, of the three systems – British/Canadian, American and Israeli – the latter is by far the most democratic, if by democracy we mean allowing, or even encouraging, minority voices to be heard.

This upcoming election might be fought and won on issues of security, or it may be fought and won on issues of social welfare and the economy. Most likely, individual voters will make their decisions based on a number of issues, at least some of which do not reverberate at all outside Israel. What may be important to one voter may not be important to the next, even if they vote for the same party.

Where does all that leave us interested, well-wishing bystanders? We should attempt to understand what the elections are about, learn what we can about the various positions taken, and encourage respectful acceptance of the result, however much we might find it uncomfortable. We should advocate strongly for restrained rhetoric, for honest and fair and serious debate. Above all, we must promote and publicize the fact of Israeli democracy – even if it may be different in form from ours, scary in its rhetoric and chaotic in its appearance.

Israel is a functioning democracy governed by the rule of law, and there's nothing more one can ask of a political system. Ultimately, outsiders have no business trying to influence the outcome of this, or any, Israeli election. We must strongly remind ourselves, and the world, of this. ■

Simon Adler is a litigation lawyer in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Of friends and heroes

Bernie Farber

He was a big guy. About 5-10, 250 pounds, he wore No. 55 and once played defensive tackle for the Ottawa Sooners of the Canadian Junior Football League, one of the first Jewish boys to do so.

I met Howie back in 1972 when I ran the Ottawa Jewish Community Centre Day camp. I hired Howie to look after the kitchen, assist during overnights in Gatineau, and be the general camp shlepper. The following summer, he became the camp's head counsellor, and from there he took his talents to the 39th Wolf Cub pack, the only Jewish Cub pack in Canada. Years later, Howie became a director of Scouts Canada.

He was determined, focused and loved kids. His goal was to help young people discover themselves, and especially their athletic talents where possible, and he became a mentor to many.

Howie was a teacher, businessman, doting father and ardent Zionist. He married his childhood sweetheart, who he met at the JCC day camp, and even after his marriage broke up, I think he still carried a torch for Ellen all his life.

Following his dream, he made aliyah in 2008. In Israel, too, he became a mentor to many kids, practically bringing Little League baseball to the Holy Land. He was an umpire and coach, and he became Jerusalem regional director for the Israel Association of Baseball.

Howie took Israel's arduous guiding course. It's like getting a PhD in Israeli history, archeology, Torah and geography. He loved showing friends his Israel. I recall going with him to the ancient City of David on an archeological dig. I was mesmerized by what I learned from him.

When my in-laws recently travelled to Israel, Howie helped them see the sights. He took care, knowing they were elderly, making sure they weren't overtired and insisting they drank water and stop often to rest. He even picked them up at the airport and took them first to his small Jerusalem apartment so they could rest after their long plane trip. That was just Howie's way.

> *Howie's goal was to help young people discover themselves*

Howie died suddenly in early November. He was umpiring a baseball game when he called time out, then collapsed. He was only 58 years old.

A day or so after his death, I was sitting in a local Starbucks grieving for my dear friend. A homeless man walked in, I was sitting beside the door and he saw me crying. He sat beside me, and we began to talk. I told him about my friend Howie. He looked at me as though I was the only person there. He then told me that life was like a train on a track. We stop from time to time at different places, some just fine, others not so much, but we can only really look behind us, then left and right. We'll never know where the track ends, so he said to just try to enjoy the trip.

I bought him a coffee and a muffin, then he hugged me and left.

As I was about to leave, my daughter Gillian's latest blog arrived. She's on a trip with her husband to South America. I read it with joy. It made me laugh, and it made me cry. But in a strange way, it brought me so much peace.

Yes, I guess these two incidents are linked. You see, Howie's train ride ended much sooner than it should have, but he definitely enjoyed his stops in life. He used to tell me that even those that stung held lessons for him. Gillian and my son-in-law, Adam, are also on a glorious train journey that will mould their lives for years to come.

Howie Osterer was my friend and my hero. His passing is, in its own way, a life lesson. As Howie would say, even the bad lessons are good lessons. ■

Is reform touching the haredi world?

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Though opinion polls vary in assessing the fortunes of the political parties in the Israeli election next March, the pundits have hitherto found it easy to predict haredi representation, because ultra-Orthodox Jews consistently vote for their own.

But things may be changing. An open letter by some 3,000 women has it that they won't vote again for haredi parties unless and until women are among the candidates. So far, only their men have been Knesset members. If one of their women sought political office, she had to join another party, as did Tzvia Greenfeld who for a time represented the left-wing Meretz party.

The haredi establishment vehemently opposes the women's initiative, using the traditional argument that everything that's new is forbidden by the Torah. As long as the rabbis who hold the reins of power don't allow the inclusion of women, most haredim are reluctant to openly dissent.

To include women candidates would also be a tacit admission that secular and non-Orthodox Jews have a case when they champion gender equality, and that's anathema to those who regard themselves as the only authentic custodians of God's will for the Jewish People.

An article published earlier this month in the *Times of Israel* by Chevy Weiss, who describes herself as a haredi activist working behind the scenes, deserves close attention. She's opposed to the new initiative because she regards the political arena as "a spiritually dangerous place for haredi women." At the same time, however, she offers compelling reasons in favour of women's political involvement.

First, haredi women, she writes, have always been supporting men to enable them to study Torah. As a result, women are much more familiar with practical problems in life and, thus better suited to serve the public. And men who represent haredim in politics are deprived of studying Torah, which is their real and perhaps only vocation.

I can think of a no more damming indictment of haredi male politicians: they aren't familiar with the issues they're called upon to decide, and being in politics forces them to neglect their primary responsibility to God.

Second, women are usually the breadwinners in the haredi family and thus better acquainted than their fathers, husbands and sons with economic realities. Women, writes Weiss, "have ideas for solutions and want to implement them now." With few exceptions, she adds, the men neither listen nor respond to views put forward by women. Here then is another case for women politicians and another put down of men.

Third, Weiss writes: "Haredi women are suffering. They are overworked, being the breadwinners and raising children while the husbands increasingly fail to take responsibility." Referring to the growing divorce rate among haredim, she reports that "the community organizations and batei din favour the husbands more often than not."

Hence this startling conclusion: "Haredi women with political power would be a huge help to all females." So why is she against the initiative of the 3,000 women? In addition to pointing to the spiritual perils of politics, she's too loyal a member of the haredi world to dare to openly challenge its "sages" and appear to give in to modern trends. Though she acknowledges the need for women's voices to be heard, she seems to resign herself to the fact that in her world such voices must remain muted and only manifest themselves "behind the scenes."

Having been raised in the United States, as she tells readers, she's sufficiently American to champion the cause of women to whom men, according to her, don't pay sufficient attention. But as a haredi loyalist she nevertheless toes the line.

The glaring inconsistency and uneasy compromise deserve our sympathy, as the effort of the dissenting women has earned the wholehearted support of the enlightened Jewish world across denominational boundaries.

The achievements pioneered by Reform Judaism and followed up by other non-Orthodox movements seem to be touching the haredi world. ■

Why the world should follow Canada's lead on Iran

Sheryl Saperia

Over a year ago, U.S. Department of State spokesperson Jen Psaki insisted: "If Iranians don't get to a 'yes' at the end of six months, we can put in place more sanctions." Speaking about the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) negotiations, she was offering assurance that Barack Obama's administration was serious about dismantling Iran's nuclear infrastructure through tough diplomacy.

Another deadline has passed, no agreement has been reached, and negotiations have been extended yet again because Iran refuses to make the necessary concessions. Nonetheless, additional sanctions have not been imposed. On the contrary, sanctions worth billions of dollars have been lifted, even though Iran continues to stonewall nuclear inspectors and has reportedly intensified efforts to obtain components for a heavy water reactor, which could be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

The Iranians have not gotten to a "yes" because they don't need to. Time is on their side. Their economy is improving because of sanctions relief, and their centrifuges keep spinning. Unwilling to risk the collapse of a potential deal, the West has not only indulged Iran's nuclear obfuscations but has also turned a blind eye to Tehran's oppression of domestic dissidents and its support for Bashar Assad's brutal rule in Syria. Even Iran's ballistic missile program is no longer a subject of discussion. And for as long as negotiations are ongoing, Israel is hard-pressed to attempt a military strike on Iran's nuclear sites.

Meanwhile, the White House appears desperate for a deal, and has proven disturbingly adept at accommodating Iranian red lines while allowing their own to be eroded. The most egregious example may be the interim agreement's recognition of Iran's right to enrichment – the core of any nuclear weapons program – thus contradicting no fewer than six UN Security Council resolutions.

When it comes to responding to Iranian misconduct, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird stand in favourable contrast to their American counterparts. Over the last two years, the Canadian government has expelled Iran's diplomats from Ottawa amidst evidence of their intimidation of Iranian-Canadians. It designated Iran as a state sponsor of terror and therefore vulnerable to being sued in Canadian courts by victims of terrorism. Iran's Quds Force was listed as a terrorist entity. When the P5+1 negotiations were extended again last month, Baird stated: "Iran's dithering is either a cynical ploy for time or an inability to clearly repudiate military nuclear ambitions. The regime must take immediate actions to resolve the concerns of the international community… Until Canada is satisfied, our sanctions regime will remain in full force."

To be fair, Canada and the United States do not occupy the same role on the world stage. If overt military conflict with Iran broke out, the brunt of any western response would be borne by the U.S. This is a scenario Obama understandably seeks to avoid.

Still, Canada's principled stand reflects sound policy worthy of emulation. Sanctions should not be lifted until Iran's nuclear program has been dismantled or a trustworthy regime has taken over. Obama's strategy of removing sanctions to entice Tehran to make concessions has been predictably ineffective – Iran arrived at the negotiating table precisely because sanctions were hurting its economy.

Ottawa could also consider further measures. Canada's current sanctions against Iran focus exclusively on illicit nuclear conduct. Perhaps the government should legislate that these sanctions cannot be repealed until Iran also ceases its terrorist sponsorship and demonstrates significant progress in respecting the human rights of all its residents.

Iranian Christians are bracing themselves for the arrests and violence that characterize the regime's seasonal greetings to its Christian minority. This may be an appropriate time for Canada and like-minded countries to signal to Iran that the behaviours that made its nuclear belligerence a concern in the first place will be met with greater scrutiny in the new year. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

Harper calls Israel a 'beacon of light' in Mideast

JANICE ARNOLD
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The horrific massacre in Pakistan and the deadly hostage-taking in Australia are a reminder to everyone that "extreme jihadism" is something the State of Israel has lived with throughout its history, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said during a visit to Federation CJA on Dec. 16.

"Thank God we have Israel in that often very dark, very difficult part of the world, showing us its beacon of light," said Harper, who with his wife, Laureen, lit the first candle of Chanukah.

More than 300 invited guests, representing a cross-section of the Jewish community, attended the event, held under strict security.

Harper recalled that, as a boy, his father at Christmas time always reminded him to remember "our Jewish compatriots and neighbours."

Harper said his first trip to Israel last January remains one of the "moments of light" of his year, while the deaths of two members of the Canadian armed forces by killers apparently motivated by Islamic extremism were among the darkest.

The occasion served once again as an opportunity for the community to thank Harper for his steadfast support of Israel.

"We have no greater ally than the prime minister," said Rabbi Reuben Poupko, spiritual leader of Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, who introduced Harper.

Among the defenders of freedom and human rights, so cherished by Jews, Harper has stood out in the world, he said.

"When you speak up for women's rights at La Francophonie in Senegal, you speak for us. When you speak up for democracy around the world, you speak for us. And when you defend the State of Israel, you speak for us," Rabbi Poupko said.

The Harpers were assisted in lighting the shamash on the silver menorah by Chabad's Rabbi Shalom Chriqui.

Federation president Susan Laxer underscored the Jewish community's more than 250-year history in Quebec and Canada, and its contributions to the country.

"Prime Minister Harper's presence today is a profound demonstration of solidarity and respect for our community's important place in Canadian and Quebec society," she said.

Laxer related Chanukah's message of a small minority's resistance in ancient times to forced assimilation to present-day local concerns.

"Recent events here in Quebec underscore the importance of preserving the place of Jewish religion and culture in Quebec society and continuing to move forward in the name of our particularism; whether it is regarding Bill 60 [the former Parti Québécois government's proposed secular values charter], Bill 10 [the current government's planned health reform], the BDS movement [the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel] or anti-Semitism in general," Laxer said.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife, Laureen, light the first Chanukah candle.
PBL PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

"In doing so, we value and protect not only our religious rights and freedoms, but also the rights and freedoms of all others."

Laxer praised Harper's "powerful example of moral fortitude and integrity… You expressed your beliefs – unequivocally and unapologetically – and succeeded in making topics of international debate perfectly clear."

David Cape, incoming national chair of the federation's advocacy arm, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, called Harper "an extraordinary friend of the Jewish community and Israel, who has brought the Canada-Israel relationship to unparalleled heights" and is "standing taller than leaders of the most powerful countries" in defence of democratic principles.

"We are living in a pivotal time, with the rise of global anti-Semitism, continued Iranian nuclear aspirations, and Islamist terrorism threatening people who cherish freedom and peace, including minorities across the Middle East," he said.

The half-hour program also included the singing of Chanukah songs by the Akiva School choir in Hebrew, French and English.

Young twins Nathan and Samuel Bensimon recited the brachot over the candles, and led the singing of *Hatikvah*. Sarah Diamond sang *O Canada* at the outset.

Following the formal program, the Harpers stayed on to allow a long line of audience members to have their photos taken with them.

In his formal statement issued on Chanukah, Harper said the festival is "an opportunity for all Canadians to reflect on the meaning of faith, freedom and the triumph of good over evil, and to pay tribute to the tremendous contributions of Canada's Jewish community in all areas of endeavour." ■

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Rabbi 'modelled the best a human being could be'

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, HAMILTON

Rabbi Zev Eisenstein's motto was "It's a beautiful day." Every morning, he would open the door to the Hamilton Hebrew Academy and greet each student with those words.

And hundreds of students and families would agree that Rabbi Eisenstein indeed made each day more beautiful.

Rabbi Eisenstein was the principal of Hamilton Hebrew Academy (HHA) for 28 years, retiring in 2001. He remained as a teacher until 2011.

On Nov. 26, Rabbi Eisenstein died of cancer in Hamilton. He was 75.

"We were all touched by his acts of kindness and his ability to make you feel like the most important person in the world. This is a storyline that repeated itself countless times over a 40-year history in our community," said Rabbi Daniel Green of Adas Israel Congregation of Hamilton, who is also dean of HHA.

Rabbi Eisenstein was born in New York City in 1939. Despite growing up in a loving home and attending Jewish parochial school, he bowed to peer pressure and was part of a gang from age 10 to 15. He was usually the one to watch for any approaching police. But when he found the youth group Bnei Akiva, his gang life ended.

Rabbi Zev Eisenstein LAWRENCE YANOVER PHOTO

When he finished high school, Rabbi Eisenstein studied in Israel for four years. Returning to the United States, he worked at a Hebrew school in Seattle. It was there he met Esther. The two married and later had four children, Chani, Chaim, Betzalel and Shayna, and 17 grandchildren.

Rabbi Eisenstein earned a degree in speech therapy and studied in New York during the summers to become a rabbi. He moved to St. Louis to pursue a master's degree in speech therapy, while working as a principal of a Jewish girls' high school.

> *I didn't just want to be a principal who sits in his office... I wanted to be involved in people's lives*

Wanting to work in a smaller community, Rabbi Eisenstein found a job in Hamilton. He also moonlighted as a mashgiach and served as rabbi for the small Jewish community in Brantford, Ont.

He once said, "I didn't just want to be a principal who sits in his office and does what he has to. I wanted to be involved in people's lives."

And involved he was.

When Jacki and Larry Levin adopted a child, Rabbi Eisenstein stood with them as she was immersed in the mikvah. Later, their four children attended HHA. Rabbi Eisenstein was at their bar and bat mitzvahs and performed two of their marriages. He sat with Jacki's dad just before he died, and when her mother died, he drove straight from the airport after returning from Israel to visit the family.

"We are so very sad for ourselves, our family and our community to have lost such an incredible man," said Jacki. "His reaching out to people to help was always infused with his warmth, his humour, his honesty, his optimism."

Jacki says that at simchahs, Rabbi Eisenstein was always the first to dance – sometimes with benches or brooms on his chin.

"The Zohar explains that in life we meet two types of tzaddikim, righteous men," said Rabbi Green. "There are those who live in a higher realm, who understand the celestial world, but feel distanced and alienated from the reality of man below. Then there are the righteous who walk beside us. They understand us. They connect with us and hold our hands and firmly grasp the challenges that we face.

"Rabbi Eisenstein taught us through deed. He modelled for us the best a human being could be." ■

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Vancouver boasts culture of rabbinic collaboration

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

Growing up in an Orthodox community in New York City, Rabbi Don Pacht recalls that he had never met a Conservative Jew.

That changed when he moved to Vancouver to head the Vancouver Hebrew Academy years ago and found himself in a milieu where rabbis of many different denominations collaborated openly, willingly and in an atmosphere of friendship.

"There's a culture of collaboration that I recognized immediately when I came to this community," he says. "It wasn't about keeping your nose down and minding your own business, but about how we could all contribute to the community as a whole."

The Rabbinical Association of Vancouver (RAV), which formed in the 1980s to represent Vancouver's synagogues and Jewish life in the Lower Mainland – home to an estimated 23,000 Jews – is one formalized example of this, Rabbi Pacht says.

"But it really goes beyond that. As a mohel, I often find myself in congregations other than the one I daven in, and there's always a very congenial atmosphere. It's not territorial. I've seen comparative communities of similar sizes and demographics where there isn't this kind of collaboration."

Rabbi Philip Bregman, a Toronto native who serves as executive director of Hillel BC and was previously senior rabbi for 33 years at Vancouver's Temple Sholom, a Reform congregation with about 700 member families, agrees wholeheartedly. "We're not plagued by the infighting that occurred and occurs in other communities, nor with an unhealthy history, because we're a relatively young Jewish community compared to Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg," he reflects.

As a new arrival in 1980, he recalls a call he received from Rabbi Zev Solomon, then the spiritual leader at Congregation Beth Israel, a Conservative shul. "It was a phone call of welcoming and collegiality, a call that every newcomer would want to receive from a colleague," he says.

Like Rabbi Pacht, Rabbi Bregman says he came from a community in New Rochelle, N.Y., where "if you threw a stone, you hit a synagogue!" Not long after he arrived, he and Rabbi Solomon formed RAV. The association of rabbis representing Hillel and synagogues throughout Vancouver – with the exception of Chabad, which has declined to participate – meets monthly in the offices of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver. ("Chabad doesn't play in the same sandbox as the rest of the community rabbis," explained one rabbi who asked not to be named. Chabad declined to comment for this article.)

Rabbi Philip Bregman, left, and Rabbi Jonathan Infeld

"We realized, coming to this much smaller community that we didn't want to be isolated, and that as rabbis, we share much more than what our differences might be," says Rabbi Bregman. As new rabbis arrived in Vancouver in the 1980s and '90s, the group that constituted RAV found they had a lot in common, growing up in the same culture and in the same age demographic. Deep, profound friendships among the rabbis formed naturally and organically.

RAV's operating budget is zero, but what happens in their meetings is "an example of what collaboration and dialogue is all about," Rabbi Bregman says. "We have discussions and we know there will be differences of opinion, but it's a rare occasion that we can't come to agreement on something. We discuss poverty in the community, anti-Semitism, Holocaust education and the nuts and bolts of Jewish life in Vancouver. I'm not aware of the cross-pollinization that occurs in other communities as it occurs here, and it's provided for a much healthier community."

Rabbi Bregman says the mikvah is a prime example of how the collaboration among Vancouver's rabbis has led to benefits for the entire community. "When [the Orthodox] Congregation Schara Tzedeck decided to refurbish their mikvah, the rebbetzins started collaborating, too. The end result was that this wasn't seen just as a mikvah at Schara Tzedeck, but rather, a community mikvah," he says.

"It was renamed the Community Mikvah at Schara Tzedeck. Find me another community that has done this," he adds. "I don't think you can. You'll find communities that say 'This is our mikvah and you can't use it – go build your own!' It's not to do with whether one group recognized the converts of another group. Rather, this is a facility we need in the community and it needs community support."

Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt at Schara Tzedeck, which has a membership of almost 500, says the rabbis involved in RAV are very supportive of one another and careful to sidestep denominational complications that might trip them up. Instead, they work together on things of interest to the whole community.

"There's a real sense that we jointly shoulder some community needs issues," he said, referring to specific campaigns and individual cases of need that RAV works on in collaboration with Jewish Family Service Agency.

The co-operation among the rabbis goes well beyond the perfunctory, adds Rabbi Jonathan Infeld at Congregation Beth Israel, which has about 650 families.

"Our group of rabbis likes and cares about each other, and we're all supportive of the community organizations and co-ordinated in our support of them."

Just last summer, he says, when the three Israeli teens were kidnapped and murdered, RAV sponsored a program to bring the community together in solidarity. "The most important aspects of our co-operation I can't speak publicly of for reasons of confidentiality," said Rabbi Infeld, who is the chair of RAV this year, alluding to the individual cases of poverty and hardship they deal with.

"But because we have a connection with one another we're able to communicate in a way that facilitates doing our job with different aspects of community life, and no friction or confrontations have arisen."

This culture of collaboration makes Vancouver a vibrant Jewish centre on the West Coast, says Rabbi Pacht. "Vancouver wouldn't be Vancouver if we didn't have this collaboration," he insists. "There would be far fewer programs, supports and resources for the Jewish community."

Says Rabbi Bregman: "There was and is a deep, abiding respect and love that we have as rabbis and colleagues for Judaism and the Jewish people. When you're talking to each other, you can then open all sorts of doors." ■

Canada joins boycott of UN anti-Israel conference

SHERI SHEFA
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John Baird.

Although the meeting was boycotted by Israel, Canada, the United States and Australia, the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention (the countries that signed on to that convention) met on Dec. 17 to condemn Israel for its actions in its conflict with the Palestinians.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said in a statement that Canada would not lend "any credibility" to the conference planned by Switzerland to discuss Israel and the Fourth Geneva Convention on Rules of War, which was adopted in 1949 in response to the atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II, and governs wartime actions as they relate to the treatment of civilians in occupied territories.

"Canada is deeply disappointed by the convening of this one-sided and politicized conference, which serves only to single out one country, Israel, for criticism. Canada has complete faith in the strength of the rule of law in Israel, and we believe the Israelis are capable of investigating matters surrounding the events that took place in Gaza in the summer of 2014," Baird said.

"This conference risks undermining the integrity and credibility of the Geneva conventions and the neutrality of their application. Such a misguided approach will neither serve the cause of peace nor bring the parties closer to a negotiated settlement."

The United States and Israel had been working in recent weeks to pressure the Swiss government to cancel the meeting.

Australia's ambassador to Israel Dave Sharma confirmed via his Twitter account that Australia would not participate.

Israel's Foreign Ministry released a statement in advance of the event, calling it "a political move whose sole aim is to utilize the important stage of the Geneva conventions for the sake of denigrating Israel... Israel, of course, won't take part in the conference, in addition to other states that clarified their objection to the Swiss government."

Shimon Fogel, president and CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, referred to the fact that this is only the third time since the Geneva conventions were put into place after World War II that the High Contracting Parties have met.

Previous meetings for the 196 UN member states who are signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention were held in 1999 and 2001 – both times to condemn Israel.

"I think that's exactly what the story is," Fogel said. "An instrument of the international community, which was put into place, really, as a response to what they witnessed happen to the Jews during World War II, has been directed against only one country, as if there hasn't been a collection of atrocities that make the Israeli-Arab conflict look like *kinderspiel* [child's play]."

He said that although the basis for the meeting is "an outrage," he is "gratified" with the position taken by Canada.

"The explanation that [Canada] advanced through the statement by the foreign minister is exactly the appropriate response to this and it challenges the other High Contracting Parties to do a little soul searching about their willingness to be exploited and used to advance a very cynical, political agenda," Fogel said.

He added that this meeting is just one of many strategies anti-Israel forces, including the Palestinian Authority, use to demonize and delegitimize Israel.

"[The Palestinian Authority is] trying to circumvent direct negotiations with Israel to seek what it wants to achieve diplomatically, not through the process that was set out by the relevant [UN] Security Council resolutions, but rather through the back door, without having to reciprocate in terms of expectations of what Palestinians would be obliged to do in return for peace with Israel," he said.

"We have to be really worried about the extent to which members of the international community, who are charged with the responsibility of upholding these mechanisms, these treaties and processes, are willing to be used in this way." ■

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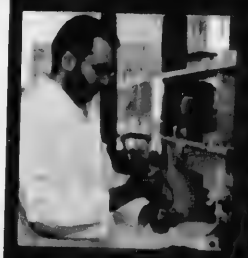

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

Disabled TDSB students celebrate Chanukah

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The spirit of giving was in full swing at Toronto's Park Lane School on Dec. 17, when 67 students with a range of developmental disabilities took part in the school's third annual Chanukah holiday concert.

Armed with a huge heart, at 96 years of age, Toronto furrier Norman Rogul is fulfilling a need to honour his great-great-nephew, 17-year old Jacob "Jake" Schwartz, who was born with a neurodegenerative disorder known as Canavan disease.

"Uncle Norman wanted to do something really nice for Jake," said Jake's mother, Ellen Schwartz. "Six years ago, Uncle Norman visited Jake's school, the Beverley School, a school for special needs students. Norman saw Jake in his setting, met the children and fell in love with them."

Every year since, Rogul would count the days until he could round up toys donated by Ganz Toys, then pick up two birthday cakes, to be enjoyed by both students and teachers.

"A chocolate cake and a vanilla one, because not everyone likes one flavour," he explained.

Three years ago, Jake graduated to Park Lane. However, "The whole of Beverley School knows of, and looks forward to, Uncle Norman's annual visit, even without Jacob there," Ellen said.

In past years, Rogul has given each student a stuffed animal or toy. This year, he decided to give the Park Lane students winter toques in a rainbow of colours, donated by Naomi and Devorah Shapiro of Rock 'N Karma designs.

Rogul's daughter, Denise Rogul Newman, said, "Although the situation is heartbreaking, it is also heartwarming."

Pictured, back from left, are Matt Kahane, Lenna Zosky Shiller, Zachary Levy, Norman Rogul, Ezra Tennen, Seth Zosky Shiller, and Stacy Zosky; and front, from left, Jennifer Zosky, Jacob Schwartz, Ellen Schwartz and Ben Schwartz. SUSAN MINUK PHOTO

Why does Rogul do this?

"Because of who he is. My parents instilled tzedakah in us from an early age: we must give back, and help others. Dad does just that," his daughter said.

The Park Lane students were entertained by talented twin sisters Jennifer and Stacy Zosky. Stacy plays guitar and they both sing. Jennifer is Jake's aunt and Stacy is a longtime friend of Ellen's. Their group, called Second Nature, was accompanied by two of their kids, Zachary and Seth, who brought with them several of their enthusiastic and talented friends to sing along, too.

The duo have been singing to Jake since he was a little boy, and they continue the tradition every Sunday at the Schwartz home.

"Jake hears the music and he just comes alive. You can see it in his eyes. You can see it in his body. He feels it. He hears their voice and he lights up," Ellen said.

"The kids respond to our music. It's a really beautiful thing to watch," said Stacy Zosky, who is director of associate programs at Goodmans LLP.

"We are here to give something of ourselves, but we get so much back," added her sister, who works as a social worker.

Music teacher Gloria Gordon holds a school-wide Chanukah assembly each year, as well as celebrating all the cultural holidays through art, music, and dance.

"We do everything around music, because it's one of the best mediums to work with kids who are not verbal," she said.

During the concert, students and teachers displayed beaming smiles as they expressed their delight by clapping, singing, swaying, tapping, shaking bells and tambourines, and even dancing for some. Rogul also showed off his dance moves by dancing alongside his nephew Jake in his wheelchair.

Park Lane is one of the Toronto District School Board's special education facilities. It boasts a high staff-to-student ratio, with students ranging in age from four to 21 and teachers from a range of different backgrounds.

Rogul said he's very proud of Jake.

"Jake and I have a great rapport. I still remember his bar mitzvah. He was carried up to the bimah, and both the cantor and the rabbi sang to my Jacob. You have never seen such depth of emotion," he said.

"Jake was supposed to live two to three years and now Jake is approaching his 18th Birthday! It's a miracle and I thank God," he added, with eyes welling up. ■

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BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

Canada looks to Israel to develop oil sands technology

PAUL LUNGEN
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Canadian oil sands companies are turning to Israel to help them solve technical issues related to water management, land reclamation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance (COSIA) announced last week that it was extending associate membership to the Canada-Israel Industrial R&D Foundation (CIIRDF),in order to team up with Israeli high tech companies and improve its environmental performance.

"This strategic relationship will enable CIIRDF to better assess Israeli technological capabilities that could address the needs of the oil sands companies and contribute to the sustainable development of this industry," the CIIRDF said in a statement.

"I think this is potentially huge in terms of Canada-Israel co-operation," said CIIRDF president Henri Rothschild. COSIA companies are planning to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on environmental issues in the coming years and CIIRDF's role as an associate member, coupled with its ties to Israel's chief scientist and its familiarity with Israeli high-tech industries could lead to tremendous expansion of the commercial relationship in the sector, he said.

"We'll continue to brand Israel as a problem-solver" and "increase the presence of Israeli industry in Western Canada for years to come," Rothschild added.

Similar sentiments were expressed in Alberta. "COSIA is delighted to welcome CIIRDF as an associate member of our alliance," said COSIA CEO Dan Wicklum. "Through COSIA, participating companies have developed 777 technologies valued at more than $950 million to improve environmental performance in the oil sands. By combining Canadian and Israeli know-how, we can potentially develop new solutions that address our key environmental priority areas (EPAs): tailings, water, land, and greenhouse gases."

At the initial call for proposals for the newly inaugurated CIEST Fund in April 2013, Henri Rothschild, left, was joined by, from left, Gary Goodyear, minister of state for science and technology, Joe Oliver, then minister of natural resources, and Israeli Consul General in Toronto DJ Schneeweiss.

COSIA spokesperson Nicholas Brown said the organization, an alliance of 13 companies responsible for 90 per cent of oil sands production, has asked its associate members, including the CIIRDF, for help in addressing the four EPAs.

"We consider [CIIRDF] to be an innovation hub," he said. "They're leveraging the resources in Israel."

As a COSIA associate member, the CIIRDF will receive detailed information on the technological specifications of the oil sands producers' needs. "We're going to present to COSIA members a list of Israeli proposed responses to their questions needs," Rothschild said.

COSIA has indicated it will also listen to alternative solutions offered by Israeli companies which may not directly address their initial queries, he added.

Canadian and Israeli collaboration on innovative solutions to energy R&D matters has attracted the interest of both governments. Eighteen months ago, the Canada-Israel Energy Science and Technology Fund (CIEST) was established under CIIRDF management to support R&D partnerships between Canada and Israel. The joint research was to focus on technologies and processes to be used to develop unconventional oil and gas resources.

Natural Resources Canada committed $5 million to the CIEST Fund over three years, with matching funds from the government of Israel on a project by project basis.

> *I think this is potentially huge in terms of Canada Israel co-operation*

Six collaborative projects with contracts worth almost $30 million resulted, as well as several bilateral workshops.

COSIA representatives attended some of the workshops and heard presentations by Israeli companies about their multi-disciplinary solutions to technical problems. A suggestion was made to the CIIRDF to apply for associate membership status and the application was approved unanimously by all 13 COSIA members, Rothschild said.

COSIA was launched in March 2012, with a roster of major players in the oil sands, including Syncrude Canada, Canadian Natural Resources, Suncor Energy and Shell Canada. The organization brings together experts to improve environmental performance in the oil sands. In addition to the 777 technologies brought into the arrangement on its inauguration, 238 projects that deal with environmental improvements have been added, with a value of $400 million, Brown said. ■

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Bulgarian prince is proud that grandfather saved Jews

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Hermann Leiningen's lives quietly in Oakville.

You would think that Prince Hermann Friedrich of Leiningen, the great-great-great-grandson of Queen Victoria would exude an air of grandeur.

You wouldn't imagine him sporting a crown. Royals don't do that much these days. But you'd probably not expect to see someone of this lineage wearing a kippah.

Not only did Prince Hermann, 51, don a kippah, but he defied expectations of royalty with his humble manner and self-effacing humour when he spoke at Congregation Habonim Dec. 4 about his grandfather, Tsar Boris III. The Bulgarian king is credited with saving 50,000 Bulgarian Jews from the Nazis death camps during World War II.

About 110 people came out to learn more about the Bulgarian Jewish community and their king from the Canadian-born prince, a Bay Street banker and father of three, who lives quietly in Oakville, Ont., and goes by the name Hermann E Leiningen.

He was born about 20 years after his grandfather's mysterious death in 1943, which occurred 10 days after his grandfather's meeting with Adolf Hitler. Leiningen said people suspected that Boris III was poisoned, because he had many enemies.

Leiningen said the Germans were unhappy the king wouldn't deport Jews and Russians, who continued to maintain an embassy despite being at war with Bulgaria. He may also have been targeted because his country was allied with Germany.

There is also some speculation his grandmother's sister, an Italian royal, may have had a hand in his grandfather's death.

He described Tsar Boris III as both a man of peace and an enlightened despot. He surrounded himself with loyal and obedient ministers and a rubber-stamp national assembly. "Very few people stood up to him... My grandfather ruled as a dictator. He was an absolute monarch."

Leiningen said his loose alignment with Germany enabled him to maintain control of Bulgaria. "He pursued policies that were best for the country."

The king faced political challenges, but managed to straddle competing allegiances of pro-Nazi ministers and a pro-Russian people, he said. "Although he had a pro-German government, the palace was able to say 'no' to every demand of Germany."

His grandfather resisted pressure from Germany to attack Russia and deport Jews.

"The strategic loose alliance prevented a rollover of German troops. Otherwise it would have been impossible to help save the Jews... Not one Jewish citizen was deported." In fact, Leiningen said there were more Jews in Bulgaria at the end of the war than at the beginning. "There were 48,000 at the start of the war and 50,000 at the end."

He described Bulgaria as a tolerant place, where Jews, Christians and Muslims lived in harmony. "There was no anti-Semitism. Jews were in the armed forces, at universities, and they served as ministers in the government."

He said his grandfather stopped the Nazi deportation trains and put Jews in labour camps to work on the roads in Bulgaria. "He told the Germans their work would benefit the Third Reich."

Although King Boris received many posthumous awards, he was never honoured by Yad Vashem, because there is a blight on his record. After participating in the Serbian campaign with Germany, Bulgaria was awarded control of territories in Serbia, Greece and Macedonia.

Under pressure from Germany, Bulgaria eventually deported the 11,000-plus Jews living in those occupied territories, says Leiningen, explaining that his grandfather could not save them, because these Jews were not Bulgarian citizens.

Russia occupied Bulgaria in 1944, and while the Bulgarian Jews managed to survive the war, the majority immigrated to Israel. The royal family was exiled and moved to Portugal, a country that became home to many of the exiled royal families of Europe, according to Leiningen.

His family arrived in Canada in 1957. He says his mother advised him to keep his royal identity under raps. For the most part, few people knew of his lineage.

A few years ago he was outed by *People* magazine in a story about the 100 people in line for the British thrown. "A friend said, 'Did you know there's a prince with your name who's 97th in line for the throne?' Now I'm 145th. When someone dies I move up. When someone is born I move down." ■

Torontonian takes reins at Calgary federation

Adam Silver

SHERI SHEFA
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Adam Silver, the former executive director of Toronto's Bernard Betel Centre, is taking his Jewish leadership skills to Western Canada, where he will serve as the new CEO of the Calgary Jewish Federation.

Taking a few minutes to speak to *The CJN* amid the chaos of packing up his life in Toronto to move with his wife and three children to his new home in Calgary, Silver said he's excited about his new post.

"I get the sense that the community is warm and welcoming. They've welcomed me already, and embraced me and my wife. Our family has yet to travel there as a family unit, but we're excited to begin that chapter," said the 43-year-old Silver. "There are a lot of good things happening and there is also a lot of opportunity."

Outgoing CEO Drew Staffenberg, who is retiring and moving back to his hometown in New Jersey to be with his children and grandchildren, is pleased with Silver's appointment.

"He started here officially in November, and we've had some chance to transition. I'm very pleased with the decision the search committee made for their next leader," said Staffenberg, who first served as Calgary's Jewish community leader from 1983 to 1993, and again from 2011 until now.

"I think Adam has some tremendous strengths. He's got good leadership skills, a big vision and believes in a strong Jewish community. I feel like I'm handing over the community to a strong next leader... He's a very thoughtful, strategic guy."

In addition to working at Bernard Betel since 2008, Silver has worked for the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

He also worked as a part-time professor in Seneca College's social service worker program.

He holds a master of education degree in adult education and community development from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, and has completed coursework toward a master of arts in philanthropy and development at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

As the new CEO of a federation that represents about 8,400 Jews, Silver said he's looking forward to getting to know the community.

"It is a vibrant and engaged community. There is a real sense of pride in their local and national partnerships as well as in their partnerships with communities in Israel. People roll their sleeves up and make things happen," he said.

"I have to learn the community and learn some of the nuances and figure out what I need to address and where I can bring some strength in terms of leveraging already successful ventures."

Silver said he's confident that there is opportunity for growth in leadership development and engaging the next generation.

"There are some great initiatives that are coming out here that are maybe not as well known in other circles across the country. They have an integrated bursary program for people who want to live a Jewish life. Rather than going to the camp, the shul, the school, etc., and asking for subsidies, it's a centralized subsidy application that says, here's what a Jewish life is going to cost, here is what I can afford as a potential community member, and it is a really dignified way of engaging people," he said.

"I think there is a lot of opportunities to leverage that and either roll it out across the country through the lessons learned or even continue to refine it locally to get more people engaged in Jewish life."

Silver said he expects some challenges when it comes to achieving his goals.

"We have limited capacity because we don't have as many potential leaders, or as many infrastructural pieces in place. I think that is part of it. In general...the growth of Jewish communities across the country is a little bit slower than other ethno-specific communities, and I think our remaining a valid voice... takes strategy. It doesn't just happen... I think we need to be mindful of how to do that." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Educating people about COPD essential, doctor says

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A retired Toronto-based respiratory specialist hopes his book about the causes and dangers of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) will draw attention to what he called a "largely unrecognized" disease.

Dr. Anthony Rebuck, author of *Breathing Poison: Smoking, Pollution and the Haze*, spoke to *The CJN* about his latest book, which includes information he gathered from his work with patients, clinical research and statistical data from leading professionals in the field.

"When you ask people, 'Have you heard of breast cancer?' Yes. 'Have you heard of coronary artery disease?' Absolutely. 'Heard of stroke? Absolutely. 'Have you heard of COPD?' Uh, no, what's that?" Rebuck said.

"Yet, it is now the third-leading cause of death in the world. It is potentially fatal, it causes enormous suffering, it is incurable, there is no drug that can reverse it, and yet – here is the punch line – it is entirely preventable."

Rebuck, author of other books including *A Doctor's Torah Thoughts From Singapore*, said he was inspired to write his latest book about COPD after spending 14 years living in Singapore, a city in the Asia-Pacific region where air pollution, smoking and "the haze" have contributed to the prevalence of COPD.

"The haze is the illegal burning or clearing of fields that goes on in Indonesia, and it came across in a terrible cloud across the whole of Southeast Asia. It was so bad that in Singapore… cars couldn't drive because you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. It was dreadful," said the England-born doctor who immigrated to Toronto in 1971 to practise respiratory medicine before taking a position with a pharmaceutical company that sent him to Singapore.

"A couple of people at work started saying things to me like their child spent last night in the emergency room with their first attack of asthma. No allergies, no family history. I started to make the connection between the smoky haze and the onset of asthma. Then I looked at the world statistics for COPD and I looked at pollution levels of various countries in Asia, and it seemed to me that it had been underestimated tremendously."

Rebuck said that according to the World Health Organization, COPD will be the third-leading cause of death and disability by 2020, and more than 2.5 million deaths a year can already be attributed to the disease.

He said this disease, despite its prevalence, is largely unrecognized.

"The book is really an attempt to say, 'Look, COPD is real, it is among us, it is affecting our friends and family, and it is causing terrible disability. We've got to do something about this.' So, all the causes are completely preventable, if only we can influence ourselves and our governments to do something about it," he said.

This is a health crisis on a global scale, he warned, and not confined to the Asia-Pacific region.

"Canada is the third-best country in the world as far as pollution is concerned… and the air here is very, very good. The standard of medical care here is excellent… and yet, over 4.5 million Canadians still smoke, and that's about 18 per cent of the population. I think that's a tragedy. Now, the prevalence of smoking has been steadily decreasing, but the rate has slowed down over the last few years, so people are not quitting at the rate they were. I think government has an enormous role to play in this," he said.

Dr. Anthony Rebuck

> *COPD is real, it is among us, it is affecting our friends and family and it is causing terrible disability*

Rebuck believes COPD should be approached by governments and the medical community in the same way Type 2 diabetes has been dealt with in recent years.

"For many years, Type 2 diabetes and obesity were viewed in the same way – you just eat too much and you don't exercise, but there is a lot more to it than that… So much attention is being paid to obesity and dieting and exercise, and I think we need to use that sort of energy and commitment to talk about COPD," Rebuck said.

"For many years, people thought this was self-inflicted. It's because of smoking, and you've got a smoker's cough and that is your fault, and why should I commit resources and energy to treating you when you're just going to go on smoking? There is no realization of just how incredibly dangerous it is. And it's fatal and incurable."

He believes that educating the general public and medical community about COPD is essential, and he hopes his book will succeed in getting the conversation started.

"The objective of the book is to try to nudge an awareness in thousands of people, and to recognize the fact that this is a very severe problem in Asia, but not confined to Asia. This has global implications and if this book can even just a tiny bit increase awareness, I'll be very pleased." ■

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Winnipeg Rhodes Scholar looks forward to Oxford

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Alexa Yakubovich, Winnipeg's 12th Jewish Rhodes Scholar recipient, says she was surprised and excited to have won the prestigious honour.

"I had my interview in Calgary on Nov. 29," she says. "There were so many other amazing candidates. I got the call that same evening just after I got home."

Established by 19th century British explorer and entrepreneur Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Scholarship is the oldest and most prestigious international scholarship program in the world. Eleven scholarships are awarded in Canada every year. They aim to nurture public-spirited leaders for the world's future.

In terms of leadership and accomplishment, Yakubovich, 23, certainly meets the criteria. She graduated in June 2013 from the University of Manitoba with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology (with a philosophy minor) and a grade point average of 4.45, out of a potential maximum of 4.5.

She spent last year at Oxford earning her master's degree in science (with distinction) in evidence-based social intervention. Her master's thesis – supervised by Lucie Cluver and funded by a Rotary Global Grant Scholarship – investigated predictors of childhood disease in low socioeconomic and high-HIV-prevalent communities in South Africa.

Since returning to Winnipeg in September, she's been working as a research assistant at the University of Manitoba for Katherine Starzyk, who heads U of M's personality and social justice laboratory and the Centre for Human Right Research. Yakubovich's focus has been on strategies to improve water and sanitation services for First Nations in Canada.

Scholastic achievement isn't the only factor determining who gets a Rhodes Scholarship. Also taken into consideration are a student's extra-curricular activities, and Yakubovich met the criteria in that area as well.

She has long shown an interest in charitable work. For her bat mitzvah, she started a fundraising project called "Beads for the Cure" to raise money for the prevention and treatment of women's cancers.

"For several years, I made bead bracelets and sold them to stores and through other venues," she says. "I donated the proceeds to [CancerCare Manitoba's] Guardian Angels fund."

In high school, she was also involved in many different committees dealing with social justice issues.

Alexa Yakubovich

> *Psychology major is heavily involved in charitable works and graduated from the University of Manitoba with a 4.45 (out of 4.5) GPA*

In the summer of 2012, Yakubovich volunteered with Save a Child's Heart (SACH), an Israeli humanitarian organization that provides pediatric cardiac care for children from developing countries who suffer from heart disease and can't get adequate medical care in their home countries, and also works to improve pediatric cardiac care in these countries so kids can be treated at home.

Over the years, Yakubovich has also pursued a passion for dance. From ages three to 19, she danced with Winnipeg's Shelley Shearer School of Dance, then with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. At Oxford, she took part in its dance and ballet societies.

Yakubovich will be returning to Oxford next fall to start work on her PhD under the supervision of Cluver, an associate professor in the department of social policy and intervention. The Winnipegger is planning to do research for her PhD on the health of children in South Africa.

After earning her PhD, Yakubovich says she'd like to return to Canada to continue researching social determinants of children's health and well-being. ■

DEALING WITH CHILDREN'S AID

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
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Counsel
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Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

An anonymous person has reported an unfortunate incident or incidents concerning your child and someone in your home to a *Children's Aid Society*. In the Toronto Jewish community this Society is known as the *Jewish Family and Child Service* of JF&CS. The report may have indicated neglect or abuse. It may have been reported by a school teacher based on observations or by statements made by the child or hearsay from a third party. The events may never have happened. Or they may have been taken completely out of context or irresponsibly exaggerated. Every person in Ontario who becomes aware of an incident of neglect or abuse against a child is legally obligated to report it to a local Society. Many professionals who fails to do, such as a teacher, doctor, or lawyer, can be prosecuted for not doing so. In turn, each Society in Ontario has a legal duty to investigate every such report.

After investigating such reports the Society has various options. It can decide that there is no threat to the safety of the child and simply close the file. But even then the Society retains a record of the incident. It is never 'erased.' Should there be a further complaint then a record of 'closed' files can demonstrates a "history" of investigations and may become strangely relevant, especially if that later complaint verifies abuse or neglect. If after an investigation, the Society feels certain concerns of abuse or neglect are warranted, it may request that you sign a consent to a supervision Order or to a voluntary "service plan agreement." If you sign then an assigned case worker can show up to your home and/or the child's school *unannounced* at any time to interview the child, to ensure for his/her welfare and to interview the caregivers. In rare cases, if you don't the Society could apprehend the children with police assistance if the concern is serious enough or go to Court to get either a "supervision Order " or "apprehension Order." Even if the Society applies to Court for only a supervision Order, Judges have to the power to order an apprehension and have done so in some cases.

In most occasions these investigations are not only necessary but required to protect the safety of minor children who may have been the subject of physical or emotional abuse or neglect, often for an unconscionable period of time. However, it is not uncommon for malicious individuals to make false reports for their own twisted reasons purposes, whether to exact revenge or as gut-wrenching tactic in a parenting dispute. If the child is not able to communicate because of his/her age or for fear of retribution or other reasons, a parent is often left in a very frustrating and difficult position, particularly if the allegations are false.

Sometimes a caseworker or social worker overreacts. Sometimes they don't take complaints seriously enough. In fact, if one considers news media reports about child protection matters you will rarely hear about correct decisions because the news usually only reports mistakes. Therefore Societies are always held accountable for either doing too much or too little e.g. when a child either dies or is injured because some caseworker failed to protect that child sufficiently. Alternatively a Society is often attacked for being inhumane when it wrongfully apprehends a child and places him into foster care or up for adoption on the flimsiest of evidence, including hearsay.

Yet the vast majority of cases never appear in the media because Societies across Ontario often do exactly what they are mandated to do: protect our children. And while condemning the mistakes when they occur is important, we should all be greatly indebted to those who tirelessly work for these agencies.

There is one practice that should be changed, however. In Ontario, many caseworkers are not social workers and don't have to be. This money-saving anomaly in our laws has to change. Would you let anyone other than a licensed auto mechanic touch your car? No? Then why allow anyone other than a licensed social worker to make decisions about whether our kids are in harms way and how to deal with such sensitive situations?

So how does a parent react on receiving a call from a Children's Aid Society? Often a caseworker will call requesting that they wish to interview members of your family. Moreover they will want to interview you child privately? You are understandably nervous. You have heard that Societies have the power to apprehend your child and place them in foster care.

The answer depends on the facts. Your best bet is to call a competent family law lawyer with experience in child protection. Like a tailor, each client's suit requires a different size and design.

My family and I and Garfin Zeidenberg, wish all my readers a belated freylich Chanukah.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit ***www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.***

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Hockey legend Jean Béliveau was my idol growing up

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In my youth, Jean Béliveau was my idol.

Growing up in Winnipeg in the days of the Original Six, in which each broadcast featured either Toronto or Montreal, just about everybody was either a Maple Leafs or a Canadiens fan.

For me the choice was easy. I loved the Habs because of that elegant statuesque centreman who always had the puck and who played the game with incomparable skill. No one could handle the puck like him, no one could dish it to wingers like him, no one could deke a goalie out of their jockstrap like him.

A friend used to joke that unlike all the other skaters, he played the game wearing white gloves, and that if he ever got into a fight, he'd removed the gloves one finger at a time, like a gentleman of breeding and taste.

Big Jean was always unfailingly polite, courteous and considerate whenever he was interviewed. He played the game like a gentleman among brutes.

I got the chance to meet Le Gros Bill, as he was known, in of all places, Israel.

Béliveau was twice named honorary chef de mission of the Canadian Maccabiah team and on one of the trips, I interviewed him. He talked about the Games and how he enjoyed doing something he never had the chance to do during his lengthy playing career – walk into a stadium dressed in Canada's red and white, representing his country

Béliveau retired at the end of the 1971 season, winning his 10th Stanley Cup, but too late and too old to play for Team Canada at the 1972 Summit Series against the Soviet Union. Not being able to represent Canada was something he regretted.

We talked about the Maccabiah Games and naturally, he touched all the right bases and said all the right things.

Then I asked him about his Habs (by then, I was no longer a fan) and he talked about changes they'd made and how their season was looking good, but I wasn't paying attention to much of what he said. It didn't really matter. I was talking hockey with Jean Béliveau! How great was that?

Then I told him my story. When I was a kid, I had a table hockey game. In those days, the little metal players were the Maple Leafs in blue on one side, and the Canadiens in red on the other.

Naturally, I always played the Habs side, and we kids also did the play by play during the game. Where my friends might say it's Dave Keon at centre and Frank Mahovlich on the wing, I named my centre Jean Béliveau, my wingers Jean Béliveau, my defencemen were Béliveau, even my goalie was Jean Béliveau.

Which one is the NHL legend and which is the *CJN* reporter?

"You know Paul," he said. "When I was a boy, I had a table hockey game too. And my players were Elmer Lach and Toe Blake..."

I said, "Mr. Béliveau, we're so much alike. So how come you ended up in the NHL and I ended up playing hockey at one o'clock in the morning?"

He smiled a broad smile, and didn't say anything. Too polite to put me in my place.

But I made Jean Béliveau smile. Small payback for all the joy he provided a little boy from Winnipeg watching him play the game as only he could play it. ■

Biblical tale will likely be around for years to come

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Despite the presence of such Jewish actors as Edward G. Robinson (sounding more Brooklyn than ancient Israelite) in the 1956 edition of *The Ten Commandments*, these movies weren't really about the Jews, or if they were, as in Ben-Hur, they were only a set up so that Heston's Ben-Hur could, in effect, convert to Christianity by film's end. Of course, one has to recognize that in America, the Hebrew Bible has long been adopted by Christians as their own, too, so the Jewish origin of the Old Testament figures is not paramount in their minds, nor is the idea of casting Jews in those roles of concern to the filmmakers. Even *Noah* filmmaker Aronofsky, who is Jewish, picked Russell Crowe and other non-Jewish actors like Anthony Hopkins and Jennifer Connelly for the key parts.

As for filmic depictions of Christ, always a staple of movies, the idea of casting a Semitic-looking actor in the role of the rabbi from Galilee should be considered, but rarely applies. Witness blue-eyed Willem Dafoe cast as Jesus in Martin Scorsese's controversial *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988). (Admittedly Jewish actor Harvey Keitel was cast as Judas, the villain of the piece, but he, too, like Robinson, sounded as if he came from a New York neighbourhood.)

Other film adaptations such as Mel Gibson's infamous and revisionist *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) were blatantly anti-Semitic, providing an offensive portrait of satanic Jewish children cavorting in the background and Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect who sentenced Christ to death, depicted as a mild person reluctantly forced to do so by the stereotypically drawn, pushy Jewish elders. (Oddly, few film critics or members of the Hollywood establishment, many of whom were Jewish, would openly admit that the film was anti-Semitic.)

Fortunately, the faithful took to the element of Christ's (graphic) suffering in the movie as their main storyline and seemed to ignore the film's anti-Semitic overtones. We're probably lucky that Gibson never made the Judas Maccabeus movie he said he wanted to do (though the story of Chanukah, in the right hands, could make for a terrific movie).

It's ironic that the Hebrew Bible, the basis for so much of Judaism's beliefs and history and the subject of so many examples of an art form in an industry founded by and still dominated by Jews, is so devoid of actual Jewish content. (I teach a course called "The Image of the Jew in Film and Television," and Gibson's movie, as a dark example, is the only one of the biblical epics I've ever referenced in film clips.) Perhaps that's all to the better, as Hollywood hasn't exactly made too many fine or worthwhile Bible-based movies. (1985's *King David* with Richard Gere in the title role traipsing down the streets of Jerusalem clad in what looks like a diaper, is this sub-genre's low point.) And it should be noted, much of the renewed emphasis on the current crop of biblical stories comes from Hollywood's desire to draw in the evangelical American Christian community, which traditionally shuns most modern movies because of their violence, language or sexual explicitness.

Though *Exodus* was the top grossing movie the week it opened, it's too early to tell if it and the other biblical epics to come will all be box office successes. (History Channel's 10-part 2013 TV series *The Bible* was a big hit for the network, spawning a 2014 feature film, *Son of God*.)

Since Hollywood ultimately considers box office success to be the final arbiter of the projects that actually get made, the Bible as the subject for cinematic endeavours could be over as quickly as it started. But since Hollywood is also reluctant to venture too often into anything too original or revolutionary, the tried and true Bible tale – and many of them, including the '50s versions of *Ben-Hur* and *The Ten Commandments*, shown every year on TV at Easter, are cultural staples – whether specifically Jewish or not, will likely be around for years to come. ■

Shlomo Schwartzberg is a long-time arts journalist and teacher and former director of programming of the TJFF.

See related story on page 30

INTERNATIONAL

Gross' release signals change for Cuba's Jews

JTA
WASHINGTON

Alan Gross was imprisoned while trying to connect Cuba's isolated Jewish community to the wider world. The deal that five years later got him released may just accomplish that, and much more.

Gross' flight home to suburban Washington on Dec. 17 with his wife, Judy, was part of a historic deal that overturns over five decades of U.S. policy isolating the Communist island nation helmed by the Castro brothers.

"We will end an outdated approach that, for decades, has failed to advance our interests, and instead we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries," U.S. President Barack Obama said, in announcing Gross' release and the radical changes in U.S.-Cuba policy.

In a conference call, U.S. officials outlined sweeping changes, including the resumption of full diplomatic relations, the opening of an embassy in Havana and a loosening of trade and travel restrictions.

Dina Siegel Vann, director of the American Jewish Committee's Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs, said Gross' release and the opening of ties with Cuba will have a two-fold benefit for Jews: In addition to the benefits accrued by all Cubans from open relations, she said, Cuban Jews "will have stronger ties to Jewish organizations and will be much more in the open." An estimated 1,000 to 1,500 Jews live in Cuba.

Gross, who is now 65, was arrested in 2009 after setting up Internet access for the Cuban Jewish community while working as a contractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development. Never formally charged with espionage, Gross was convicted in 2009 for "crimes against the state."

Back in the United States, Gross held a news conference, which he began with the greeting "Chag Samayach," noting that his release coincided with the first day of Chanukah. He thanked political leaders, the Washington Jewish community, the local Jewish Community Relations Council and other faith groups that had pressed for his release.

"But ultimately – ultimately – the decision to arrange for and secure my release was made in the Oval Office," said Gross, reserving special praise for Obama and his National Security Council.

In a deal American officials said was technically separate from the Gross release, the United States and Cuba agreed to exchange the three remaining incarcerated members of the "Cuban Five," a Florida-based spy ring, for an American spy held in Cuba for 20 years, and whose identity remains a secret.

Obama insisted that Gross was not part of the spy exchange and that, in fact, his imprisonment had held up changes to the U.S.- Cuba relationship that he had intended on initiating years ago.

"While I've been prepared to take additional steps for some time, a major obstacle stood in our way," the president said, referring to Gross' "wrongful imprisonment."

Many Jewish groups welcomed the deal, and noted the political difficulties it must have created for Obama.

"We know the decision to release the Cuban three was not an easy one," the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said in a statement. "We appreciate the efforts of President Obama and Vice-President Biden in bringing this about."

Gross is in ill health. He has lost more than 100 pounds since his incarceration and suffers from painful arthritis.

A senior administration official who spoke to reporters before Obama's announcement said the Vatican played a key role in negotiating the deal, in part through Pope Francis' pleas to Cuba to release Gross as a humanitarian gesture.

In a statement, the Pope said he "wishes to express his warm congratulations for the historic decision taken by the governments of the United States of America and Cuba to establish diplomatic relations, with the aim of overcoming, in the interest of the citizens of both countries, the difficulties which have marked their recent history."

The administration official also noted the significance of the Jewish holiday season of freedom. "We believe that Alan was wrongfully imprisoned and [are] overjoyed that Alan will be reunited with his family in this holiday season of Chanukah," the official said. ■

SeeJN | Candlelighting ceremony

HAIM ZACH/GPO PHOTO

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, left, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the head of the Mossad, Tamir Pardo, light the chanukiyah on the third night of Chanukah at a candlelighting ceremony held at the president's house in Jerusalem.

New gas field discovered off Mediterranean coast

JTA
JERUSALEM

A new natural gas field was discovered off Israel's Mediterranean coast – the third largest found in Israeli waters.

The Royee field contains 3.2 trillion cubic feet of extractable natural gas, the Israeli business daily *Globes* reported, citing a report released Dec. 14 by Ratio Oil and Israel Opportunity Energy Resources, which owns the field.

Royee, located about 150 kilometres from Israel's coast, near the international maritime border with Cyprus and Egypt, ranks behind the Leviathan and Tamar fields.

Tamar, which has at least nine trillion cubic feet of natural gas, is expected to meet Israel's energy needs for the next 20 years. Leviathan is estimated to hold 16 trillion to 18 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Globes reported that Royee is unlikely to be developed soon, due to the quantity of gas available in Leviathan and Tamar.

The discovery comes on the heels of an oil spill from a pipeline into a desert nature reserve near Eilat, which is being called one of Israel's worst environmental disasters.

The Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline ruptured Dec. 3 next to the Evrona reserve on the border with Jordan. The break occurred during maintenance work on the pipeline that runs between the Mediterranean and Red seas, according to reports citing a preliminary investigation.

More than 80 people were treated for respiratory problems due to the spill, mostly over the border in Jordan. Three Israelis were hospitalized for inhaling toxic fumes.

The amount of crude oil spilled is estimated at thousands of gallons, according to the Environment Protection Ministry.

"Rehabilitation will take months, if not years," Guy Samet, director of the southern region for the Environmental Protection Ministry, told Israel Radio. "This is one of the State of Israel's most serious pollution events. We are still having trouble gauging the full extent of the contamination."

Highway 90, the main road into the resort town of Eilat, was closed in both directions for about 30 miles as emergency teams worked to stanch the flow of oil. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

Stabbing attack leaves Crown Heights tense for Chanukah

MICHAEL FRAIMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, NEW YORK

Not much has changed at the Chabad-Lubavitch Headquarters since Dec. 9, when a man burst into the main library at 770 Eastern Parkway and stabbed a 22-year-old yeshiva student in the head.

These days, there's a police cruiser sitting outside the building at all hours—but there always has been one, even before the attack, according to the nonchalant officer on duty.

If anything, the atmosphere is festive, with Chanukah decorations and street-side vendors on Kingston Avenue selling tinsel decorations and golden chanukiyot.

One thing that has changed, however, is the open-door policy at the headquarters, commonly called "770" for its address. The staff has begun, once again, to lock the front doors at night. "When things like this happen, a lot of things come into review," says Motti Seligson, a Chabad spokesperson. "Security is one of those things."

But it's a cosmetic difference: the building is still open 24/7, and yeshiva students still sit among the wooden benches in the bottom-floor library at all hours.

And the community has not grown more suspicious. Chassidic members of Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighbourhood are generous with their time and enjoy chatting with strangers. But ask about the aftermath of Dec. 9, and their faces change – they look alarmed, sad, maybe a little annoyed that random violence is what's attracting attention. There is a palpable tension in the air. They would rather discuss the Messiah, the Rebbe, their studies and prayers. "Everyone makes their own calculations," one woman tells me. "Some are praying more, some are performing mitzvot, some are asking God, 'Why?'"

Outside the Chabad-Lubavitch headquarters. MICHAEL FRAIMAN PHOTO

Cellphone video footage of the attack is on YouTube. It doesn't show the stabbing of Israeli student Levi Rosenblatt, but it does show Calvin Peters, 49, – who struggled with a history of drug-related arrests and bipolar disorder, it was later revealed – staggering around the 770 library, taunting cops and students, "You want me to kill you?"

University-aged yeshiva students scrambled around the room, hiding behind bookshelves, pleading for police not to shoot the man. It was 1:40 a.m., and the room was dark and fairly empty. "Drop the knife," an officer repeated. Peters complied, only to pick it back up and take two steps towards the officers. One cop quickly shot Peters once in the stomach, leaving him groaning and bleeding on the floor.

Peters died in hospital two hours later.

The violence was unprecedented at 770. "This was very shocking to everyone," Seligson says. "At the same time, any loss of life is very much a tragedy."

Lubavitchers should take comfort in the fact that police declared this a one-off anomaly, rather than an act of terrorism. But that also makes the horror that much more difficult to comprehend: terrorism we can explain; randomness is chaos.

And that chaos is what Jewish people constantly struggle to justify.

"God wants us to be good and believe in Him, even when it's not easy," says Yossi Liberow, a student at Chabad. Liberow was sent out to talk with me at 770, not because I'd asked, but because I was lingering outside with a camera and large bag, and members were understandably concerned.

"The reason He made a bad world is so that we can uplift it," he adds. "When things are bad and you do the right thing, that's doing a mitzvah, bringing Mashiach closer."

Liberow proves this attitude on a short tour inside the building. They serve free coffee in the lobby; Yeshiva students laugh and chat, bounding over the wooden seats; older men huddle among the books, murmuring prayers in advance of Chanukah.

And while Chanukah was never the holiest high holiday, this year, in Crown Heights, it has taken on deep significance. On Dec. 11, a Lubavitch rabbi gathered together a small group to celebrate 19 Kislev, the "Chabad Rosh Hashanah." The gathering, every year a celebration, took a sombre tone when the rabbi brought up Rosenblatt.

But then he recalled the story of Chanukah. That, too, was about the invasion of evil; when Syrian-Greeks seized the Jews' temple, Liberow paraphrases to me, "darkness came into the place of light." A sacred place was defiled, and Jews grew scared.

Calvin Peters was no Antiochus, and the NYPD are hardly modern-day Maccabees. But along Eastern Parkway, Crown Heights candles will burn through windows with purpose. They will illuminate the night in defiance of, and thanks to, that ever-reaching darkness beyond. ■

Israeli Supreme Court upholds conversion revocation

AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN
JERUSALEM

In a case that illustrates what might be termed Israel's unique theocratic democracy, the Supreme Court ruled Dec. 17 against a motion from lawyers representing Yonit Erez, whose conversion to Judaism was revoked by Israel's rabbinical courts. The rabbis took the radical step after concluding that Erez had misled them in promising to lead an Orthodox life.

In the petition, Justice Neal Hendel was asked whether the rabbinical court had the authority and jurisdiction to cancel Erez's conversion two years after it was approved by the same rabbinical court system. The motion was heard by Hendel, who was joined by Deputy President of the Supreme Court Miriam Naor and Judge Esther Hayut.

Erez was represented by lawyers from the Center for Women's Justice, including Susan Weiss, who, like Hendel, immigrated to Israel from the United States. The rabbinical court was represented by state attorney Roi Shweka and Rabbi Shimon Yaakobi.

In his decision, Hendel wrote: "Just as the civil court has the inalienable authority to reverse – in extremely rare cases – a final judgment, so, too, does the special religious conversion court. For otherwise, we would allow for judgments that are flawed from their inception to exist eternally."

According to Hebrew news website *News1*, the conversion court decided to revoke Erez's conversion based on the fact that she completely changed her lifestyle shortly after her conversion, with no remnants of observing the mitzvot, which she agreed to uphold.

Observing religious commandments is imperative in Orthodox Jewish conversions, the only religious stream whose conversions are recognized by the State of Israel.

From Erez's seemingly secular lifestyle, the conversion court concluded that her original statement agreeing to maintain a religious lifestyle was a deception, and that even *a priori*, she had no intention of doing so.

In the decision released Dec. 18, Judge Naor agreed with Hendel, but emphasized there should be no assumptions that this judgment is a precedent for cancellation of other conversions. Rather, it relates only to those obtained through deceit. Judge Hayut concurred.

In the short time since the judgment came out, one expert reacted with shock and bafflement to the original religious court's decision to revoke the conversion.

According to Chuck Davidson, a modern Orthodox rabbi and social activist on what he calls "the conversion crisis in Israel," it is very clear in rabbinic literature that there is almost no instance in which a conversion can be revoked.

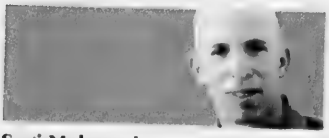
"From the Middle Ages onward, the greatest of the rabbis wrote explicitly that even if immediately after the conversion the convert goes off to worship idols, the person is still considered Jewish," said Rabbi Davidson, who has published extensively on this subject.

Rabbi Davidson, who does not know the specifics of the case, said, "Unless there was payment or bribery, if reversal is based on non-observance, there is zero basis for overturning it. If the conversion was kosher with a kosher beit din, then it is impossible to reverse."■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

OPINION

On the bus



Sagi Melamed

According to an Arabic proverb, "The love that comes after hostility is sweeter than candy." Sometimes the short distance between violent confrontation and embraces lies in the character and actions of a single person.

I met Yair Ansbecher several years ago. Months of my older children going out after Friday night Shabbat dinner for a "discussion for teens with Ansbecher" and returning with shining eyes had made me curious about this fellow married to a woman from Hoshaya, a communal settlement in northern Israel. After Ansbecher spent an entire Shabbat during Operation Protective Edge with my son's military unit in a godforsaken training zone, rockets flying overhead and mosquitoes buzzing around, my admiration for him only grew.

My daughter recently shared with me a story that demonstrates the enormous tension in Israeli society. Here is Ansbecher's story in first person:

"A few days ago, I was on the bus from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. A young Arab woman in hijab [traditional Muslim head cover] got on holding a bag, prompting suspicious attention. I scanned her quickly and dismissed my natural suspicion by deciding someone must already have checked her. It quickly became clear that other passengers were less complacent than I.

"In the middle of the Ayalon highway the bus pulled onto the shoulder. The driver came to the back of the bus and hesitantly asked all the passengers to open their bags, while apologizing and saying that he doesn't actually have the authority to ask. A minute after this strange examination concluded, the bus resumed its journey.

"I thought I could get back to my nap, but the bag check was repeated. This time, the driver seemed even more embarrassed. Because I had just finished my military reserve duty and all I wanted was to get home timely and safely, I asked the driver forcefully, 'What's happening?'

"The driver stammered that some of the passengers were suspicious of a passenger and he couldn't continue driving.

"'You mean the Arab woman?' He gave a brief nod.

"Apparently, my dusty military uniform vested me with some authority in the eyes of the other passengers. But not the Arab woman. She insisted that I keep my distance and not dare touch her bag. By this time, the passengers were in three camps: those who wanted the woman checked immediately, those who defended her privacy, and those who filmed the whole thing on their smartphones. By now, I was no longer suspicious of her and I realized my mission had changed: I needed to calm the situation.

"And that is what I tried to do for the rest of the journey, talking with the offended woman. I apologized for the suspicion and explained that the concerns of the passengers were not malicious. We Jews have been in a state of fear and suspicion of strangers for 2,000 years.

"The woman answered that fear and suspicion don't mean you can invade someone's privacy. Every time she goes out something like that happens. We were both starring in a drama that neither of us wanted. For a moment, we were close to violence, even though we were both right. Then we understood that our real enemy is lack of trust and mutual fear. We got off the bus as friends who respect and understand each other better."

Ansbecher ended with a plea to our Arab neighbours:

"I beg you, rise up with a moderate voice! Fight the wicked and the extremists. Don't be drawn into another war, even if your bags get examined. Try to understand that it's not racism, it's fear of terrorism and our bloody reality. Let us unite to fight our common enemy – lack of trust and mutual fear."

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins emphasized recruiting the best people for leadership positions and called it "Getting the right people on the bus."

On our metaphorical bus we, too, need the right people. ■

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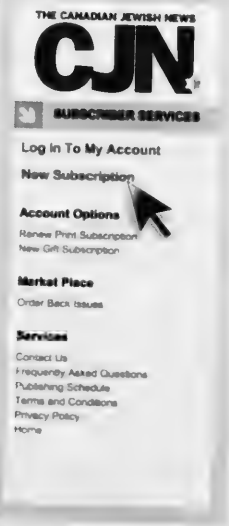

Women kindle menorah lights at Western Wall

JTA
JERUSALEM

Women of the Wall members light the candles on the third night of Chanukah, Dec. 18. DANIELLE SHITRIT/FLASH90 PHOTO

Security guards at the Western Wall entrance confiscated menorahs from several women, but dozens held a Chanukah candlelighting ceremony in the women's section.

The guards said they were acting on orders from Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the rabbinic authority of the Western Wall and holy places, the group Women of the Wall said in a statement Dec. 18.

Last Thursday evening, some 28 chanukiyot were lit by 120 women, including Rabbi Susan Silverman and her sister, the Jewish comedian Sarah Silverman. Knesset members Tamar Zandberg and Michal Rozin of the left-wing Meretz party joined the group.

"The Kotel belongs to us all, and each of us, men and women, have the right to light Chanukah candles in this public, holy place," Anat Hoffman, chair of Women of the Wall, said in a statement after the candlelighting.

Women of the Wall, which meets at the Kotel once a month for prayers for the new month, had requested, in a letter sent last month to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to hold a Chanukah candlelighting ceremony in the women's section of the holy site. They asked that a large menorah equivalent to the one that is lit on each night of the festival in the men's section be placed in the women's section, allowing the women to hold their own public lighting.

Netanyahu transferred the letter to Vice-Minister of Religious Affairs Eli Ben Dahan, who passed the letter on to Rabbi Rabinowitz. According to the group, Rabbi Rabinowitz said the menorah lit on the men's side can be seen by all. ■

Mikvah-related lawsuit adds rabbinical group as defendant

JTA
WASHINGTON

A lawsuit arising out of allegations of voyeurism at a Washington, D.C. ritual bath added the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) as a defendant.

The lawsuit, filed earlier this month by a third-year student at Georgetown University's law school, initially named as defendants Rabbi Barry Freundel's Washington synagogue, Kesher Israel, the adjacent mikvah and the student's law school for allowing Rabbi Freundel's alleged misdeeds to go unchecked.

WJLA, the local *ABC* affiliate, reported that, at a press conference Dec. 18, the law firm representing the plaintiff, Silverman, Thompson, Slutkin and White, added the RCA as a defendant, as well as two additional plaintiffs in a class action.

Calls to the law firm were unanswered, and Rabbi Mark Dratch, the RCA's executive vice-president, said the organization had not yet been officially notified of the suit.

RCA suspended Rabbi Freundel in October and instituted reforms to prevent similar abuses.

The student in the original lawsuit took a class taught by Rabbi Freundel and immersed at the mikvah while researching her paper.

She named Georgetown for failing to adequately look into Rabbi Freundel's background when hiring him.

"This case involves an unfathomable breach of trust by a Georgetown professor and religious leader and defendants' utter failure to prevent and/or stop it," the original lawsuit stated.

One of the new plaintiffs is Emma Shulevitz, who had approached Rabbi Freundel in order to convert and who has written about her experiences with Rabbi Freundel, as well as the ostracism she has suffered since speaking out.

The *ABC* report did not name the other defendant, but suggested the lawsuit could expand to include students of Freundel at another university, Towson, in Maryland. ■

U.S. will not support Palestinian state resolution as drafted

JTA
WASHINGTON

The Obama administration does not support a draft Palestinian statehood resolution submitted to the UN Security Council.

"In terms of the specifics of this, in its current form, we cannot support it," State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki said at a daily briefing for journalists Dec. 17.

A draft Security Council resolution submitted by Jordan and leaked to *Ha'aretz* and other media calls for a Dec. 31, 2017 deadline for an Israeli withdrawal to "borders based on 1967 lines" with land swaps.

"We wouldn't support any action that would prejudge the outcome of the negotiations and that would set a specific deadline for the withdrawal of forces," Psaki said.

She did not count out a statehood-related resolution per se, saying the United States wanted "further consultations."

Psaki noted that the Palestinians "are not pushing for a vote right now," and are also open to consultations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Dec. 18 that Hamas, the terrorist organization now controlling the Gaza Strip, would soon rule a Palestinian state in the West Bank.

Separately, Psaki encouraged the European Union to return Hamas to a list of designated terrorist groups.

"We believe that the EU should maintain its terrorism sanctions on Hamas," she said at the Dec. 17 briefing.

A European court said the 2001 designation was underpinned by faulty evidence, but effectively maintained the sanctions, to give European authorities time to reinstate the ban. ■

Jewish Life

Kosher jokes for the Halaladays

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Comedians Eman Elhusseini and Jessica Salomon remember hanging out at a now closed comedy club in Montreal several years ago and getting into a discussion, over drinks, about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The bar completely cleared out," laughs Salomon, a red-haired, native Montrealer who jokes in her set that she looks more Irish than Jewish. "People were pretending to be smokers so they could get away from us."

But the two comics, who had recently met through Montreal's standup scene – though Elhusseini, also in her 30s, born in Kuwait and raised in Montreal by Palestinian parents, had several years on Salomon in terms of experience – were energized by the discussion and launched into fast friendship.

They currently share an apartment in Brooklyn, where they're based temporarily as both work to break into the scene there.

"[Israel-Palestine] was never really an issue between us," Salomon said. "We're both open-minded, moderate and always curious to hear each other's perspectives."

Back in Montreal, Elhusseini had, after observing how well Muslim and Jewish comics seemed to get along, to be naturally drawn to each other and to find affinities in their senses of humour, already developed a Jewish-Muslim comedy show in Montreal with Jewish comic Jeff Shouela, with whom she still produces the Montreal iteration.

A year later, Salomon came on board as a co-producer and the two women began taking the show on the road to Ottawa and Toronto.

The show, *Kosher Jokes for the Halaladays*, is intended to showcase Muslim and Jewish comics and their commonalities, but also, Salomon said, "to bring together people that aren't normally in a room together."

"Jess and I often fight about who is hated more, my community or hers," Elhusseini joked. "[The show is] about making light of this plight. Both communities have parents that drive us nuts, and both want you to marry someone of your own kind...Through exposure and interaction we realize we're more similar than we are different and what we may have learned [about the other] growing up isn't necessarily as accurate as what we thought."

"Kosher Jokes" typically features Elhusseini and Salomon's curated mix of local Jewish and Muslim comics from each city, as well as the womens' individual standup acts.

Having just finished its fifth year (though fourth in Toronto and Ottawa), *Kosher Jokes* played to a packed crowd at Toronto's Comedy Bar Dec. 14, hosted by local comedian Faisal Butt, with the show's jokes running the gamut from Jewish and Arab parents, respectively, to intermarriage, sex and male pattern baldness.

Though Israel was only briefly touched on, by Salomon, who did a bit about the country being like the abandoned house in a horror movie: Beautiful and enticing, but haunted by its previous tenants, who, it turns out, "actually have a legitimate claim" on the place, the women explained they don't shy away from the subject in their material.

"I've made so many Israeli-Palestinian jokes in the past," Elhusseini said, "But it's hard to constantly generate new material about it...I'm doing more jokes these days about religion."

The reactions they get are varied, with older crowds tending to laugh less at material that pokes fun at more conservative or hardline Jewish views on the conflict in Israel.

This is likely because their audiences, across the three cities, though less in Ottawa, are largely comprised of Jewish people, and include far fewer Muslims.

In Ottawa, Salomon, who previously worked in the field of international law, explained they have connections to a group called the Canadian Centre for International Justice, and the latter often helps bring people from diverse backgrounds to see *Kosher Jokes*.

"We also get a lot of Christian or non-religious people there that are part of the human rights world. Those are the ones that we count on to drink," she quipped.

Elhusseini noted that the Jewish community is generally very supportive of comedy, compared to the Arab community, which she said is "less used to it.

"It's a cultural thing," she explained. "They don't fully understand what standup is all about. The Jewish community tends to take chances on new talents, but the Muslim community kind of wants you to already be an established star. Once you're a star, they'll pay big bucks for it, but they don't have the patience or understanding to nurture an up-and-coming comedian – somebody like me, who's not really that known yet."

Both Elhusseini and Salomon credit the way they were raised for helping to foster a sense of openness in them.

"I grew up with a Jewish best friend," Elhusseini said, "and I was always exposed to people of different ethnicities...We have some conservative Muslims in my family that are religious, but I never noticed much racial tension. We were immigrants in an environment that was so open to people from all different communities."

Eman Elhusseini and Jessica Salomon, with red hair.

Salomon, who didn't attend Jewish day school, emphasized the importance of interacting with people from different backgrounds.

"That generally makes people open-minded," she said.

Still, the two admitted they're not immune to entrenched perceptions or knee-jerk reactions when talk of Israel-Palestine comes up, and they often make a point of challenging each other.

"Jess and I are two very liberal people," Elhusseini said, "But we've caught ourselves having debates where we've had to stop and push each other to research things, rather than just using arguments we heard at the dinner table...to not have arguments based on emotions." ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

Teen actor aims to be role model for younger kids

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ninth-grader Julia Schwartz is showing the boys who's boss in the new Disney XD television series *Gaming Show (In My Parents' Garage)*.

In the show, Julia's eponymous character joins fellow teens Ian Duchene and Jesse Sukunda as they create and run an online show devoted to gaming. While the trio plays, reviews and explores various video games, Youtube celebrities and video game experts and enthusiasts – including Toronto Raptors' centre Jonas Valanciunas - often visit them.

"I think the best thing about video games is that it brings every gender and every age together," says Julia, who fondly remembers playing video games when her American cousins would venture north to her family's cottage. "It's not just a thing for boys."

In one episode, Julia donned a pink wig and sparkly makeup to interview fellow gamers at Toronto's fan expo, which many consider "Comic-Con" of the north. In the same show, castmate Jesse travelled to San Francisco to chat with the producer of the latest Sonic the Hedgehog game.

Julia prefers racing games and Mario Kart 8 is her favourite one. "I think that they're very exhilarating and it makes me excited to drive when I'm older."

While she's waiting to drive, this 14-year-old has a dizzying array of interests. Beyond acting, which she describes as her "passion," Julia loves fashion and music. She also quilts and even sews some of her own clothes, working with a seamstress to perfect her craft. "When I was little I used to tape paper together to see if I could make a dress," she laughs. "That did not work."

Julia first ventured into acting through school productions where she played roles such as Ms. Hannigan in *Annie* and Rizzo in *Grease*. Before landing her spot on *Gaming Show* – her first professional gig – she trained at Armstrong Acting Studios in Toronto.

Julia values her Jewish education from

Julia Schwartz

Sunday school and training for her bat mitzvah. Though playing video games may not seem like the most traditionally Jewish pursuit, many home gaming consoles exist thanks to the work of inventor Ralph H. Baer who died on Dec. 6 at the age of 92. Baer and his family escaped Nazi Germany for the Bronx, N.Y. in 1938.

Baer held 150 patents related to his video gaming inventions and in 2010, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Alexandria, Va.

Along with designing clothes, Julia is also inventive when working on the Gaming Show Youtube channel, which airs online videos between television episodes. "It's all improv," says Julia.

The show premiered on Nov. 16. "It's still crazy to me that I am on TV because I feel like it all happened so fast," she says. But, she's hoping to continue in the industry and wants to try acting in the drama or horror genres in the future.

For now, Julia is making the most of her time on television. "It's so cool that I'm in a position where I can be kind of a role model for younger kids," she says. She's become real-life friends with her castmates and wants to use her position of influence on *Gaming Show* to help viewers have fun, stay grounded and enjoy life.

Gaming Show (In My Parents' Garage) airs on Disney XD Sundays at 6PM ET. ■

Ottawa prof wins Yad Vashem book prize

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

University of Ottawa history professor Jan Grabowski used the recently accessible records of thousands of wartime trials of Nazi collaborators while researching his book, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland*, for which he was awarded the 2014 Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research on Dec. 8.

Some 40,000 to 50,000 collaborator trials occurred in Poland after August 1944, roughly 3,000 of which focused on people who murdered, hurt or denounced Jews, Grabowski said during a telephone interview with *The CJN* from Warsaw, a day after the awards ceremony in Jerusalem.

Long forgotten and neglected, the trial records serve to give a voice for the first time to the Jews who were murdered by Polish and Ukrainian collaborators while in hiding or on the run, he said.

Hundreds of witnesses cited in the documents "quote the last words of the Jews before they were led to their executions. They will tell you why these people never survived. It enables us to find out what really happened in something that we call nowadays the margins of the Holocaust."

The Hunt for the Jews focuses on the fate of the Jews who attempted to flee the German system of liquidation between 1942 and 1945, and their relationship with the local Polish and Ukrainian gentiles. "The system of hunting for the Jews was basically staffed by the locals to a great degree," Grabowski, 52, said.

According to his grim calculus, about 10 per cent of Polish Jews or roughly 250,000 people evaded deportation to the ghettos and fled the death trains and places of death; of these, perhaps only 35,000 survived. "So I am looking at the roughly 200,000 people who tried desperately to survive but didn't."

A shorter version of his book, *Judenjugd*, provoked a huge public discussion upon its publication in Poland in 2011. "I was actually surprised, not by the intensity but by the openness of the discussion," Grabowski said. "It proved that in Poland, you can have a good debate about very very painful parts of the past."

But in general, he noted there "is no enthusiasm in Eastern Europe – to make an understatement – to dip into this documentation. You are coming up with some very unpleasant findings." ■

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MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Henna House casts a spell.

Through vividly described images, powerful, evocative tugs upon the senses and a narrative that is brazen and tender, numbing and pleasurable, sorrowful and delightful, Nomi Eve effects a form of literary hypnosis upon the reader. The work releases its grip only with the turn of the last page.

This is quite a remarkable feat since the narrator, Adela Damari, recounts her story in retrospect. At the outset, she foreshadows in very broad terms where the story will eventually lead. No matter. How it transports us there is the magic carpet we ride back in time, witnesses to the life Adela lived intensely, passionately, vulnerably, dutifully, and finally, courageously.

Henna House is a historical novel. The story sweeps through large epochal events of the 20th century beginning with the narrator's birth in 1918 in the northern hillside town of Qaraah, Yemen. Compared to the larger cities of Sana'a and Aden, Qaraah was relatively untouched by modernity. Indeed, its residents led a style of life essentially unchanged from the lives of their forebears long ago. Women were mostly illiterate. Amulets, charms, secret codes, and fear of the evil eye were mainstay features of everyday life. In addition, there was the inescapable sense of oppression of Jews, an officially tolerated religious minority, by a frequently intolerant majority.

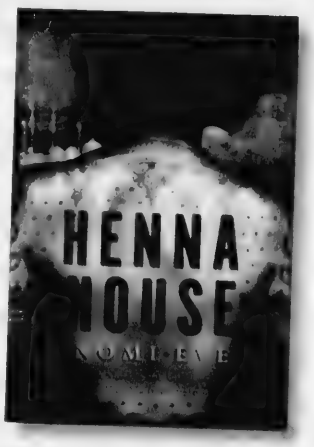
The terrain and landscape of Yemen – religious, cultural, social, political, and geographic – hovers over virtually every page of the book. Only after Damari is carried "upon eagle's wings" to the nascent State of Israel, in the last portion of the book, are we freed of the danger that lurked constantly around the corners of the Jews' lives in Yemen.

Although Adela is the creative fulcrum upon which the dramatic events of the story hinge, Eve also creates arresting portraits of other vivid, memorable characters. Many compelling figures such as her aunt Rahel and cousin Hani, both masters in the art of henna dyeing, play significant, determinative roles in Adela's life.

In Qaraah, the rules of separation between men and women were unambiguous. The two sexes intersected primarily in two domains: at the table and in the bedchamber. In part to enhance relations in the bedchamber, especially the newlywed chamber, the use of henna was a pivotal aspect of women's lives. The custom is ancient, exotic, sophisticated, complex and purposeful.

Eve uses henna as a narrative reference point and as a metaphor, as a literary device and as a symbol. She artfully portrays the nature of intra-communal relations among Jewish women in Yemen by emphasizing the importance for those women of the use of henna privately and collectively at intimate moments in their lives. For them, henna is a practice, an idea, and an esthetic underlying human existence. In a note at the end of the book, the author acknowledges the research sources she used to convey the significance of henna in the lives of Yemeni women. The *Henna House* in the title refers to the elaborate social conventions surrounding the application of the henna.

The narrator explores her gradual metamorphosis as she, too, learned how to apply henna. "Each sign had a corresponding connotation. A squiggle was a wave in the ocean, but it was also a cupped palm, a gesture of greeting, or of harvest plenty, or both…Learning how to apply henna made me look at the world differently. Where before I had seen pebbles, pine needles, blades of straw, I now saw shadows and lines that were the sinew and bone of pictures yet to be drawn."



Henna House
By Nomi Eve.
Scribner, Simon and Schuster

Adela's voice matures over the course of the story. She interprets the circumstances and the events that unfold through the multi-faceted prism of her traditional female role in the home, under the authority of her parents, under the ominously looming cruelty of the laws of Moslem Yemeni society and under the influence of her extended family.

For example, Hani asked Adela: "'Do you think Musa hits her to give her pain, or to give himself pleasure?'

"I balked, 'What do you mean? What a horrible thing to say.' I was blushing.

"'Well," Hani said, 'clearly she covers her face to hide bruises, and she doesn't appear in public so people won't gossip about her injuries. And when a man hits a wife, sometimes it is for punishment, but sometimes it is to open the gates of paradise. For him, I mean. For her? Well a man's paradise can be a woman's hell.'"

In myriad ways, Eve gives expression to universal "women's issues" as experienced by the Jewish women of Yemen. But this is merely one aspect of the story that is impressive.

Eve has also provided a cultural history of the Jewish life in Yemen that no longer exists. In addition, she places in a broader Middle Eastern context the emergency migration of the Jews from Yemen to the newly established State of Israel. Her reflections are wide-ranging and offer poignant insights into the binding ties of Jewish peoplehood.

During the Damari family's harrowing flight from Qaraah to Aden, Adela notes: "I found myself wondering in whose steps we were following. I also wondered how we could learn to read the marks left by ancient travelers on the stones of this earth." Eve is clearly hinting to us that the story she has written in the voice of Adela Damari is intended to ignite higher flames of personal inquiry among readers.

When she arrives in Israel and is questioned by well-meaning, but insensitive, bureaucrats about the belongings she brought to her new homeland, Adela acknowledges "the only true possession I brought with me from Yemen was this story." As the years pass by and Adela builds a new life for herself, she struggles to find a way to properly honour the sanctity of the memories of the family she once had. Her husband encourages her to write her memoir because "souls live on in stories."

This is Eve's second novel. Her first, *The Family Orchard*, a Book-of-the-Month Club main selection, was nominated for a National Jewish Book Award. Eve teaches fiction writing at Bryn Mawr and lives in Philadelphia with her family.

The souls of Adela Damari's family populate the *Henna House*. It is a place worth visiting. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

A conversation with consulting rabbi on Exodus

JORDAN HOFFMAN

Director Ridley Scott doesn't do anything small. When he nails it, it's legendary, as with *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *Gladiator*. When he's got a turkey, it's a misstep that would destroy most ordinary men, like *1492: Conquest of Paradise* or *Robin Hood*. His latest is *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, and it has people talking before anyone has even seen it.

There was controversy about the casting, in which Brit Christian Bale played the Israelite Moses and Aussie Joel Edgerton played the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramses II.

Then there were grumblings that "faith-based" audiences might reject a movie that deviates from the Biblical text.

There were rumours that God is envisioned as a petulant child, and that Moses could be interpreted as a schizophrenic hearing voices, not communing with the Divine. Furthermore, early reports said that the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea would get the full 3D CGI treatment, but would also have a backdoor for "scientific" explanations, like a well-timed tsunami in lieu of faith offering the Israelites their needed escape.

Having seen the film, which opens on Dec. 12, I can tell you that the rumours are (mostly) all true. Whether or not this hurts the film is up to your interpretation.

Nevertheless, Ridley Scott and his producers didn't dive into the sea without waving a staff over it. They hired the services of Rabbi David Baron of Beverly Hills' Temple of the Arts.

Temple of the Arts approaches religion through music, drama, art, dance and film, and "is somewhere between Reform and Conservative if you must label us." Being situated in the heart of showbiz, Rabbi Baron has been a consultant on a number of film and television programs. It likely comes as no surprise that the man can talk, and he and I had a great schmooze after I saw *Exodus: Gods and Kings*. An abridged version of that conversation is below.

How did you establish yourself as a go-to guy to check on Biblical matters for film and television?

It developed out of relationships with members of my congregation who were directors and producers. When they dealt with Jewish subject matter, they turned to me for either referrals to a scholar or a PhD, or if it was a generic question that my familiarity with the subject matter warranted, then to secure my services to consult.

The first was the 1991 movie *Mobsters*, where they were replicating the wedding reception of the mobster Meyer Lansky in New York in the '20s. They wanted to know what the chupah and ceremony would have looked like. I was able to give them a pretty good overview of what a Jewish wedding ceremony circa 1925 looked like.

And then from there – it's a small community. "Oh, I used this rabbi for this, and I used this rabbi for that." I did not make myself a *macher*; these things either happen or they don't happen.

So, you say "members of your congregation" — okay, well, Ridley Scott, last I checked, is not a member of the Hebraic faith, so he clearly is not someone who's coming to your synagogue. How did you get involved in Exodus?

One of the people who worked for producer Peter Chernin's company asked for me specifically; he knew I had written that book *Moses on Management*, and in some of my sermons that he attended, I spoke in great detail about scholarly interpretations of the Book of Exodus. They thought if they were going to take some departures from the Biblical text, that they ought to get an input on where they were departing from the text, what controversy might it create.

So, not to rap them on the knuckles and say, "Uh-uh, this wasn't how it worked," but more of a dialogue of, "We know we're making this change; how does that affect the character? How does that affect the way Moses is interpreted?"

Correct. And also — how would it be received by audiences? That ranges from the fundamentalist Orthodox Jews and Christians to the more open-minded liberal. And again, I emphasize: This is not a group of scholars, clergy, and rabbis writing the movie, it's a group of Hollywood moviemakers bringing excitement and drama.

Let's talk about religious literalists, people who abide by the letter of the Torah or the King James Bible. What are they going to see in this film that will strike their fancy, that they'll say, "Ah, yes. That moment in that film is exactly as I know it."

I think they will come away enthused that this Biblical episode, which tells the story of freedom we need so desperately in our world, is being revisited for the 21st century. So, I think that will be very important, because young people, specifically young people, may come away inspired, may learn something.

Director Ridley Scott with actor Christian Bale on the set of *Exodus* 20TH CENTURY FOX PHOTO

That's the endgame for me: that young people from all religious backgrounds see this eternal story of freedom taking new light. And maybe they'll go back to the Bible and reread it, compare notes. Certainly, if a film like this was never made, they'd be a heck of a lot less likely to go back and look at the Bible. So, it reopens the Bible for a new generation on a stylistic level, it relates to them, and it's a spectacle. And it's moving to see the Israelites leaving. It's powerful, it's moving.

In the film, after Moses has already spoken with God, and he's decided that he's going to be messenger and confront Pharaoh, but before the plagues come, he's almost like a Braveheart figure. There are exciting, action sequences in the film where you can see him training some of the other non-Egyptian Israelites, and teaching them how to ride a horse, and how to shoot arrows and stuff. Is there a Midrash for this, or was this, again, just something that came out of Hollywood?

This came out of Hollywood. But logical – a rebellion just happened– did this just come out of the blue or was there an orchestrated and organized slave revolt? Ridley Scott clearly wants to see this as a slave revolt as well as inspired by a divine connection.

At the end of the film, when they are on the other side of the Red Sea and they're headed toward Canaan, and Moses is speaking, I guess, to Aaron, or maybe it was Joshua. And he says, in a rather foreboding voice, "we will be perceived as invaders when we get to Canaan" and "what will become of us when we stop running?" This, to me, is a clear reference to the State of Israel, and may even be Ridley Scott saying, "I have an international audience, I have to make my film appeal to people in Turkey and France. I've got to get a little wiggle room in here and not seem as if I'm a 100 per cent pro-Israeli in my film." Did you have any reaction to those lines when you saw the film?

You know, I didn't read it in that way that you did, about the Palestinian question. If anything I had modern-day Egypt going on in my mind while I was watching the slave uprising, but as far as that specific reference at the end of the film, I don't know if he's playing to an Arab audience there, a Muslim audience there.

I do feel that the comment he's making is valid; I make it in my book . He was leading a group of recently freed slaves. For them to learn to survive and do combat, they have to become more militaristic, and how would they change once they began to inhabit their own permanent promised land?

It's a question that all nations who've gone through and experienced exile and return go through. So, we can look at the experiences of many great nations in this regard. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

JEWISH FILM SOCIETY PRESENTS ISRAELI FILM *CUPCAKES*

Toronto Jewish Film Society launches its 37th season with the French-Israeli co-production *Cupcakes* by Israeli filmmaker **Eytan Fox**. When a bunch of Tel Aviv neighbours composes a tune to cheer up one of their own, they don't imagine that it will be entered in a European song contest. An "exuberant and uplifting film that will have you dancing in the aisles."

With guest speaker **Jamie Levin**, University of Toronto Centre for Jewish Studies; co-presented with Kulanu Toronto and Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival; two screenings. $15 general, young adults $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Jan. 18, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Box office opens one hour before screenings. For subscription tickets to all eight presentations of the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 2015 season, please email joellem@mnjcc.org or phone 416-924-6211, ext. 139.

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Eytan Fox's *Cupcakes* launches the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 2015 season

New In Print: Catherine Gildiner's *Coming Ashore* (ECW Press) is the Toronto author's third memoir (following *Too Close to the Falls* and *After the Falls*). The memoir tells of her life from ages 21 to 25, beginning as a student at Oxford, then teaching in a troubled ghetto in Cleveland as it burns in riots, then attending graduate school at Rochdale College in Toronto during the drug-induced hippie era.

As described in the memoir, the author marries a Jewish man who came from Poland via Israel. The book describes her first meeting with his distraught parents who were "sitting shiva" for a lost son, her first Passover, and her marriage which is now more than 40 years old. "We have joined the Reconstructionist shul and have three bar-mitzvahed Jewish sons who have all put in their time in Israel," Gildiner reports on her website. www.gildiner.com. The book is scheduled to be reviewed in this paper Jan.8.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** presents *Forbidden Desires: The Films of Alfred Hitchcock*, a series of film lectures with clips that investigates how the famed director took the taboo subject of voyeurism and made it into an acceptable dramatic strategy. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays Jan. 12 & 26, Feb. 2 & 9; 1 to 3 p.m. Drop-in $12, students $6. Register, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• UJA presents *Working On A Dream*, featuring the **River Street Band** and **Jesse Gold**, capturing the spirit and passion of **Bruce Springsteen**. The Opera House, 735 Queen St. E., Jan. 24, 8:30 p.m. $30 cover with cash bar. Ages 19+. jgonik@ujafed.org

• An exhibition of the late Canadian artist **Aba Bayefsky's** Tattoo paintings, *Legends and Market Scenes*, is on view at the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Jan. 26.

• • •

Out of Town: The 24th annual New York Jewish Film Festival opens Jan. 14 with **Asaf Galay** and **Shaul Betser's** *The Muses of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, a "surprising and unflinching" documentary that examines the Nobel Prize-winning author's relationships with his many female translators which sometimes "blurred the lines between the professional and the intimate." The festival, which presents 47 features and short from 11 countries, closes on Jan. 29 with **Maxime Giroux's** *Felix and Meira*, a story of chassidic life in the Mile End neighbourhood of Montreal.

The festival also presents the New York premiere of *The Outrageous Sophie Tucker*, which looks at the life of the so-called Queen of Vaudeville, and is slated to open in Toronto next spring. www.filmlinc.com ■

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What's New

DEC. 25 - JAN. 8

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Dec. 25

HIJACKING THE TALMUD
Rabbi Yisroel Chaim Blumenthal presents a 3-part seminar on "Debunking missionary exploitation of rabbinic literature," 12:30-4:30 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. 416-789-0020.

Saturday, Dec. 27

TORAH STUDY
Ian Schlifer leads the Torah study at Beth Tikvah Synagogue this morning.

Sunday, Jan. 4

WINTER WALKING TOUR
Shaar Shalom brotherhood holds a winter walking tour, 10:30 a.m. Email office@shaarshalom.ca

Monday, Jan. 5

VISION IMPAIRED SENIORS CLUB
The vision impaired seniors club meets at 7:30 p.m. for an evening of entertainment and refreshments, Bernard Betel Centre. New members welcome. $5/7. Call **Bess,** 905-508-2892.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue begins its series of movies, with introduction by **Larry Ankiewicz.** Today, *Aftermath,* 2 p.m. Jan. 13, *Quality Balls: The David Steinberg Story.* 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

MORASHA WINTER 2015
Classical music and the Jews, presented by **Jerry Fink.** Six classes on Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m., starting today. Explore music for the Psalms, opera in the 19th century, music created in Terezin 1941-1944. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

Deadline reminders:
The CJN will not publish Jan. 1. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 15 is Jan. 5. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Chanukah gifts

Club Beersheba members of Na'amat Canada Toronto collected gift cards for Jewish Family and Child to purchase Chanukah gifts. From left, Ruth Heller, Dena Gruber, Judy Ross, Laura Greenberg, Norma Barkin, Bev Burman, Dasha Vinsky, Gloria Berkley, Eva Kestenberg and Phyllis Fraser. MOLLIE ROTHMAN PHOTO

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

HEBREW CLASSES
Conversational Hebrew, Ulpan method with **Yael Lev,** intermediates Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; advanced Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Two classes forming. Learn to read and write and Beginners conversational Hebrew. Pride of Israel Synagogue, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

INTERNSHIPS
Emunah Toronto is offering two internship opportunities for university students who would like to work in a religious Zionist setting at Neve Michael, an Israeli children's village, starting June 2015. Call 416-636-0036 or www.emunahcanada.org

MACCABI CANADA
Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

YIDDISH CLASSES
Improve your Yiddish language skills for conversation, reading and writing by joining a Yiddish class for adults. All levels offered. Sundays, 10 a.m.- noon, starts **Jan. 11**, Beth David Synagogue. Call **Ed,** 416-635-2883, ext. 5189 or www.committeeforyiddish.com. $150 for 10 classes.

MAIMONIDES: TWO PERSPECTIVES
Rabbi Daniel Korobkin discusses Maimonides with **Albert Dov Friedberg** and **Prof. James Diamond, Jan. 10**, 8 p.m. at Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto.

DEATH AND RELIGIOUS MARTYRDOM
Mekorot presents a course on "Dying in the name of God: Judaism's views on death and religious martyrdom," with **Jim Diamond,** Jan. 12- Feb. 2, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $60. Register at info@mekorot.ca

SUNDAY SPROUTS
Beth Tikvah Synagogue offers 16-sessions of music, sports and crafts for children age 1 to 7 and their families, starting **Jan. 11.** Call 416-221-3433 to register.

MEDICAL HALACHAH
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Treating diabetes on Shabbat," **Jan. 11,** 8:45 a.m. at Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto. Sponsored by Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov. www.torontotorah.com.

TABLE TENNIS
Maccabi Canada offers a winter table tennis session for children ages 8 to 16, starting **Jan. 10**. All skill levels welcome. Contact **Michele** at 416-398-0515, ext. 204 or michele@maccabicanada.com.

HEBREW CLASSES
Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for adults. Beginners plus, runs Tuesdays, starting Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. Intermediate Hebrew uses prayers and biblical stories to further knowledge and conversation. Offered Thursdays, starting Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. Call 416-487-4161 or programs@templesinai.net.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN
The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Parenting in the age of technology: Media personality **Joe Rich** hosts a workshop on parenting children and teens in a digital age. Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Mind-body connection for women: A 7-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Jan. 28, 1 p.m. or Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 5-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Starts Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play Pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Chanukah celebration with 'Old Hollywood' live entertainment, Dec. 18, noon. Casino Woodbine, Jan.14; Manicures and facials Jan. 8; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m., mah-jong.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 30, **Jordan Klapman** discusses "The life and music of Irving Berlin," 10 a.m. Jan. 6, **Myriam Shechter** discusses "Mistaken identities and glorious music: Mozart's delicious *Cosi Fan Tutte*," 10 a.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.
- **Feldenkrais awareness through movement,** Edithvale Community Centre, Mondays, 10 a.m. 416-665-9050.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Beginner mah-jong starts Jan. 21, 1 p.m.
- Bridge level 1 and 2 starts Jan. 19.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Roads to perdition: the dark allure of film noir," Jan. 7-28, 1 p.m.
- The JCC book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 26, 1 p.m.
- **Leon Soriano** teaches "Acrylic painting," starting Jan. 13, 1:45 p.m.
- Handbuilding and wheel throwing ceramics classes during the day and evening start the week of Jan. 8.
- Yoga Cares is a program for teens and adults with an intellectual disability. Starts Jan. 6, 7 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Subscribe today to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January-December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. Full-year pro-rated registration available.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Mondays, Jan. 5- Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- *Holidays of the Week*, by **Yaara Eshet** is in the gallery until Dec. 28.
- Adult pottery classes for participants of all levels, start Jan. 6 at 9:30 a.m. or Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. Email pottery@mnjcc.org.
- Registration now open for Hebrew Institute. Various levels, open to everyone. Contact anniem@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Daytime and evening ceramics classes for all levels, starting Jan. 7.
- Enjoy a glass workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- Daytime and evening mah-jong classes start Jan. 13.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Fundamentals of drawing and painting," starting Jan. 14,10 a.m.
- PJ Plus is a parent and tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years, starting Jan. 21.
- Adult art with **Melysa Gorlicky** starts Jan. 5, 8 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

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SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Cat tales

Dr. Michael Gordon

As part of my geriatric practice, I am always searching for ways to connect with my patients beyond the standard, "so what's your medical concern?"

I long ago learned the importance of discovering where my patients find enjoyment, solace and affection. Beyond the necessary discussions about symptoms and tests, diagnoses and treatments, it is important to explore areas of emotional support and connectivity. That domain often refers to interpersonal and family relationships as well as to fulfilling social groups.

Many of my patients live alone – either as part of their lifelong lifestyle or because of the loss of their spouse. Children may live close by or further away, but rarely in the same house, although very occasionally they may be in the same building, and sometimes in the same neighbourhood.

So it was with one of my female patients who had been referred to me because of possible cognitive impairment. It turned out she was not impaired, but was simply struggling with a confluence of many stresses in her life, including issues related to her own child. Gradually, over the first few months that I repeatedly saw her in the office to complete tests and adjust medications she was already on, things began to fall into place with her child, and those issues became less pressing. Concomitantly her mood improved, as did her thinking processes.

Eventually, she said, "I am not as preoccupied with my life and child and can get back to the things I like to do," which involved creative and artistic pursuits.

On one visit, she mentioned she had a cat that provided her with excellent company and emotional support. She laughed when she preceded her comments with, "This may sound silly to you, as most people understand this quality in dogs, but my cat is a wonderful companion and I really love her."

To this I responded, "Well I have to agree with you. Yes, dogs are great, but cats are exceptionally intelligent, affectionate and loyal – and I know, as we have four of them."

Her face literally began to glow. "Four cats – how wonderful – what kind are they?"

I explained the genealogy of our cats: two rescue creatures, one of them an old gal with a gamut of medical problems, and two purebred unrelated Abyssinians more than a year apart in age.

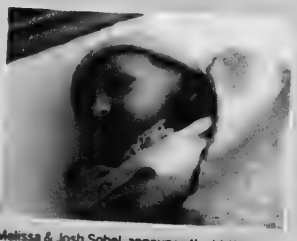
We talked cats for about 15 minutes – almost giggling at their antics and evidence of devotion and intelligence. We had both experienced their unbridled sensitivity and affection when one of us had been ill, often hovering and literally not leaving our side until our symptoms of pain or fever gradually abated.

When the office appointment finished and we finalized the medical instructions that would be communicated to her family doctor and what she would be expected to do until the next followup visit, she left and said, "Knowing that you too love cats has just made me feel a lot better and more secure in my affection for mine."

It was this sentiment that drew me, a few days later, to an article in the Aug. 4 *New York Times*, "A Man and His Cat" by Tim Kreider. In it, he says, "But I can tell you this, 'A man who is in a room with a cat – whatever else we might say about that man – is not alone.' There is no luuve… like the luuve… that exists between a man and his cat." It resonated with the clinic appointment I'd had a few days earlier.

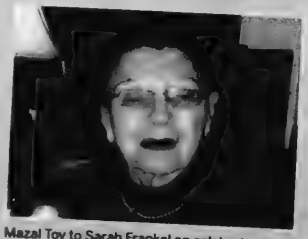
Although perhaps this is not stated in medical textbooks, findings ways to emotionally connect to older patients is important: at some time in the future, serious decisions may have to be made, and such connections and trust set the stage for successful clinical decisions. ■

Family Moments



Melissa & Josh Sobel announce the birth of Jesse Harper, Nov. 14. Grandparents, Nana Barbie and the late Zaidy Stephen, Bubbie Doreen and the late Zaidy Harvey. Great Zaidy is Ralph.

Happy 90th birthday Big Bub Sadie Katz. Lots of love from all the Katz's, Diamonds, Cantors and all your friends and relatives. XO



Mazal Tov to Sarah Frankel on celebrating your 101st birthday on Dec. 22. From your two children, 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

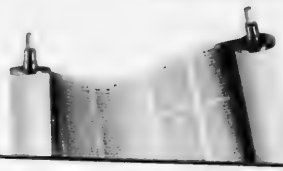
מזל טוב!

SeeJN | Learning CPR

Students and staff at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan, Ont., were trained in CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators last month. More than 15 first responders took part, including volunteerrs from York Region EMS, York Regional Police, Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, Toronto Fire Services, Canadian Red Cross and Hatzolah. From left, a York Region EMS staff member with students Daniel Jacobson and Gabriel Jacobson.

Parshah

Vayigash | Genesis 44:18 - 47:27



Yacov Fruchter says we can't hide from our responsibility to each other
Rabbi Shalom Spira explores the intricacies of Jacob's heart condition
Rachael Turkienicz highlights a new chapter in Jewish leadership

Yacov Fruchter

After murdering Abel in a jealous fit, Cain was asked by HaShem about his brother's whereabouts. Cain famously responded to God, saying "Am I my brother's keeper?"

We learned from Adam and Eve's experience with the Tree of Knowledge that we can't hide from God. From Cain and Abel, we learn that we can't hide from our responsibility to one another. By inquiring into Abel's whereabouts, HaShem is both helping Cain understand that he has done something wrong in killing his brother, and teaching a deeper message. We must be aware of our brother's whereabouts. We need to make it our business to know if someone else is distressed.

God says to Cain: "Your brother's blood is calling out to me from the ground." Abel is already dead, so Cain can't hear his brother's call, but God can.

At the end of the book of Bereshit, brothers are still calling out from the ground, and still their calls are ignored.

Joseph, too, finds himself underground, in a pit, thrown in there by his brothers who are torn. They know they don't want him around, but are ambivalent about killing him. They know this is wrong and are in the midst of a collective moral struggle.

Joseph is not innocent either, finding ways to irritate and alienate his brothers. But in Joseph we also find a brother who yearns for connection: "*Et achai anochi mevakesh,*" "I am pleading for my brothers."

While disguised as the viceroy, he hears his brothers speak about him, saying, "*haechad einenu*" his whereabouts are unknown. Joseph wants to be "known" by his brothers, and reveals himself to them in dramatic style. At the end of Bereshit, brothers are still hurting each other, but they are also doing their best to reveal their true selves to one another and find some peace. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"*Vayafog libo,*" and (Jacob's) heart stopped beating (Genesis 45:26), after he was told that Joseph was alive.

Ramban interprets the verse to mean that Jacob's heart was arrested, and he stopped breathing. Ramban claims that Jacob remained in this condition for many hours, and that during this time, his sons were yelling in his ears and showing him Joseph's wagons. Ultimately, this audio-visual stimulation enabled Jacob to recover.

Rabbi Isaac Aramah (Akeidat Yitzchak) critiques Ramban. If Jacob was in cardiac arrest, he asks, how could he hear anything his sons said?

Nevertheless, Ramban is cited approvingly by Rabbi Moshe Sofer (Teshuvot Chatam Sofer). Without mentioning Akeidat Yitzchak, Chatam Sofer deflects the critique by allegorizing Ramban's remark about respiratory arrest. According to Chatam Sofer, Jacob's pulse became imperceptible, but he was still breathing in a shallow manner, so that he remained receptive to his sons' words, albeit barely.

Arguably, Chatam Sofer's licence to allegorize Ramban derives from Rabbi Zvi Ashkenazi (Teshuvot Chacham Zvi) regarding the Gemarah in Yoma 85a. The Gemarah teaches that if an avalanche victim is found breathing through the nose, he is alive; otherwise, he is dead.

Nevertheless, Chacham Zvi explains that the reason we check for breathing is that sometimes the pulse is imperceptible (particularly in an obese patient). For Chatam Sofer, this is precisely what happened to Jacob: his heartbeat was imperceptible, but there was shallow breathing.

Indeed, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Mosheh, Yoreh De'ah) seems to associate Chacham Zvi with Chatam Sofer, by citing both sources in his analysis of the definition of life.

A different approach is adopted by Rabbi Abraham Lieblein in *Kessef Mezukak*, supercommentary to Ramban (which Rabbi Feinstein either did not see or chose to reject). Kessef Mezukak surmises that Jacob literally experienced cardiac arrest but then was resuscitated, so that he could subsequently hear his sons' good news. ■

Rabbi Shalom Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

This week's Torah portion introduces a concept that changes everything within Judaism. Joseph presenting himself to his brothers as Egyptian while they don't recognize him intrigues us.

Up until now, the Torah presents an interesting dilemma. Jacob is elderly, and no one knows who will be the next leader. Two matriarchs in one marriage contributes significantly to the confusion. Both Leah and Rachel will become matriarchs, but not for some time.

Designating the matriarch will automatically designate leadership. If the matriarch is Leah, the first wife, the leader should be Reuven, her first son. If the matriarch is Rachel, the preferred wife, the leader should be Joseph, her first son.

We all know which one Jacob is voting for. In fact, his brothers don't hate him only because Jacob favours him. By favouring Joseph, Jacob dismisses Leah as matriarch, and her sons cannot stand idly by. They plot to get rid of Joseph and thereby automatically name Reuven as leader and Leah as matriarch.

We arrive at this week's portion when Joseph presents himself as leader and confronts his brothers. Reuven does not pick up the mantle of leadership, but Judah, the fourth in line, steps forward and represents the brothers.

Judah begins to introduce a new concept to Judaism: leadership by merit.

Bloodline and birth order are the prevalent modes of leadership in the ancient world. But in this instance, following that model will exclude one matriarch, so the model must now be dismissed.

Stepping into the void is the voice of Judah, the brother who is the born leader, proved through merit, not birth order.

Ultimately, Judah's descendant, David, will be chosen by God to lead because of his unique heart. Leadership by merit: a new chapter in our ancient history. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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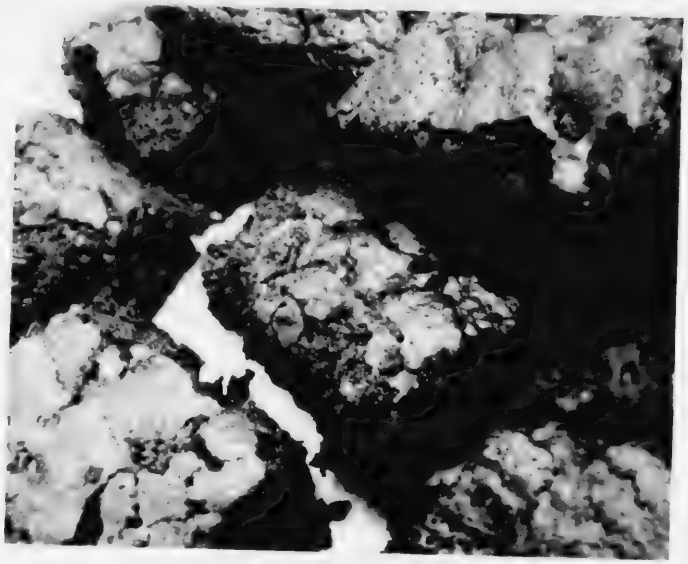
January 8, 2015 issue
Deadline: Tues. Dec. 30 - 3:00 p.m.
There will be no issue January 1, 2015

Brownies – a popular chocolate treat



EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

This is a simple column, one devoted to that favourite chocolate treat, the brownie.

For those of you who must have the answer to the dilemma of what truly constitutes a brownie, the definition that I hold with is that it is a dense chocolate dessert whose recipe appeared somewhere in the early 1900s in the United States. There are a few different sources that claim bragging rights, the most popular being that Fannie Farmer included it in her 1906 cookbook.

There is no one perfect brownie recipe because everyone's favourite is the perfect recipe. They can be more fudge-like or cake-like and contain nuts or not, and here is my favourite part – they should contain any kind (or multiple kinds) of chocolate you like. You can use milk, semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate, and for those who are allergic to or just don't like chocolate, there is a variation on the brownie theme that's made with brown sugar and without chocolate, called a blonde brownie. While these non-chocolate brownies are fine, for me, they are like eating diet ice cream. The concept works, but there is just something not quite right about it.

So this week's culinary gift to you is this column, with ooey gooey delicious brownie recipes that run the gamut from super simple to over the top, kill-me-with-calories wonderful.

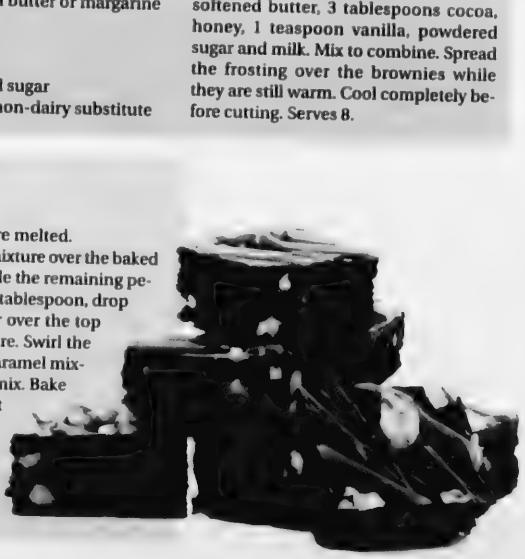
Caramel Brownies

- ❑ 2 cups sugar
- ❑ 3/4 cup cocoa
- ❑ 1 cup oil
- ❑ 4 eggs
- ❑ 1/4 cup milk
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups flour
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ❑ 1 cup chopped pecans, divided
- ❑ 14 oz. caramels
- ❑ 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk

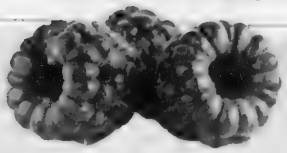
Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour a 9x13 pan. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, cocoa, oil, eggs and milk and mix to combine. In another bowl combine the flour, salt and baking powder. Gently combine the flour mixture with the egg mixture, but do not over mix.

Gently fold in the chocolate chips and half of the pecans. Spoon 2/3 of the batter into a greased pan. Bake for 12 minutes. While the brownie is baking, combine the caramels and sweetened condensed milk in a saucepan and heat over a low heat until the caramels are melted.

Pour the caramel mixture over the baked brownies and sprinkle the remaining pecans over the top. By tablespoon, drop the remaining batter over the top of the caramel mixture. Swirl the top batter with the caramel mixture but do not over mix. Bake 35 to 40 minutes but don't over bake – these should be moist. Serves 12 to 14. ■



Raspberry Cheesecake Brownies



- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 1 cup brown sugar
- ❑ 1 cup cocoa, sifted
- ❑ 1/2 cup flour, sifted
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- ❑ 4 large eggs
- ❑ 8 oz. melted butter
- ❑ 2 tsp. vanilla extract

Cheesecake Layer

- ❑ 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- ❑ 1/3 cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup raspberry jam
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 3 tbsp. flour
- ❑ 6 oz. fresh raspberries

Preheat oven to 350. Line 9x13 pan with parchment paper so that it hangs over the sides.

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the brown and white sugars and pulse to combine. Remove from the bowl and set aside. Combine the cocoa, flour and salt in a food processor bowl and pulse to combine, then set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, whisk the eggs until light and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes. Add in the vanilla and sugars, and mix to combine. Add in the butter and mix to combine. Add the flour and mix to combine. Set aside the batter.

Raspberry cheesecake layer:

In the bowl of an electric mixer combine the cream cheese, jam, egg, vanilla, salt and flour. Mix until the mixture is combined about 3 or 4 minutes.

Pour 3/4 of brownie batter into pan. Gently spoon the cheesecake layer all over the top. Using a spoon or spatula, sprinkle remaining brownie batter on top of raspberry cheesecake layer. Gently swirl the cheesecake layer through brownie mixture but don't over mix.

Drop the fresh raspberries all over the top, then gently push them into the batter. Bake for 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre of the pan comes out clean. Remove brownies from oven and cool on rack. Cool completely before cutting. Serves 6 to 8.

Fudge Frosted Brownies

- ❑ 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1/3 cup cocoa
- ❑ 1/2 cup flour
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. baking powder

Frosting

- ❑ 3 tbsp. softened butter or margarine
- ❑ 3 tbsp. cocoa
- ❑ 1 tbsp. honey
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1 cup powdered sugar
- ❑ 1 tbsp. milk or non-dairy substitute

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9X9 baking pan. In a saucepan, melt 1/2 cup butter. Remove from heat and stir in sugar, eggs and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Stir in 1/3 cup cocoa, 1/2 cup flour, salt and baking powder. Spread in bottom of the prepared baking pan. Bake for 25 to 27 minutes. Do not over bake and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes before frosting.

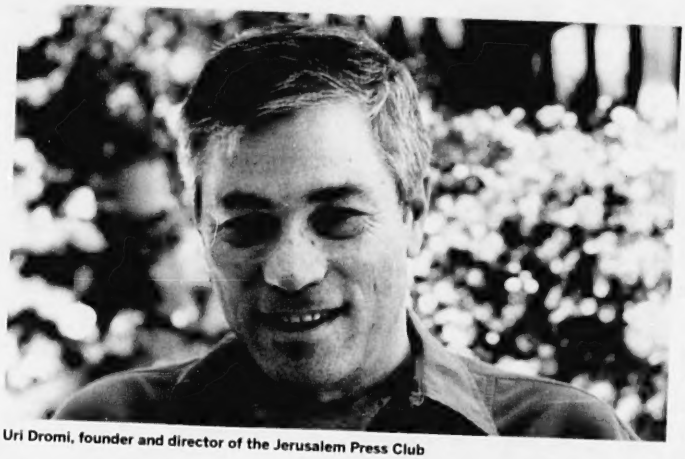
For frosting: combine 3 tablespoons softened butter, 3 tablespoons cocoa, honey, 1 teaspoon vanilla, powdered sugar and milk. Mix to combine. Spread the frosting over the brownies while they are still warm. Cool completely before cutting. Serves 8.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 25, 2014

Uri Dromi: Showing journalists a 'richer view of Israel'

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Uri Dromi is founder and director of the Jerusalem Press Club, (JPC), a space that functions as a communal workspace and networking hub for international and local journalists and related professionals in the city's Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighbourhood. Dromi, who opened the club in 2013, was formerly the spokesperson for the Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres governments, chief education officer of the Israeli Air Force (IAF) and editor-in-chief of the IAF magazine and IDF Publishing House. He was in Toronto and Montreal last month to seek support for JPC, and spoke to *The CJN* about his inspiration and aspirations for the club.



Uri Dromi, founder and director of the Jerusalem Press Club

What motivated you to launch the JPC?

I had this idea for a long time. As the spokesman for the Rabin government in 1992 and the Peres government in 1996, it occurred to me that, with so many foreign journalists based in Israel and so many visiting, we should look at the media attention as an asset rather than a liability. I see the club as something we can do to expose the foreign press corps to Israeli narratives.

A few years ago, it occurred to me that Miskenot Sha'ananim would be a good place for a press club. We got a nice grant from a trust in New York that gives to causes in Israel, and got money to refurbish and equip the place.

I had managed to visit a couple of top press clubs in the world, like in Hong Kong, London and Washington… I basically took all the best elements from these press clubs and added the great location we have, overlooking the walls of the Old City. I think we've blended all the best elements of the press clubs in the world.

What are your main goals for the JPC?

To be a hub for the foreign press based in Israel and those journalists who come here on short visits, to be a place where they can come and enjoy the facilities like Wi-Fi, the restaurant… and can sit and work. Journalists can even carry out live broadcasts from here. We also hold regular briefings, where we bring in experts to talk to journalists about different topics. For example, we had a briefing on the proposed nationality law… We believe that, at the end of the day, journalists write stories based on what they heard, saw, or who they spoke with during the day. So we're trying to provide foreign journalists with good content and speakers that represent the Israeli narratives.

I say narratives plural because this isn't propaganda, and not a government thing. We're totally private, independent, and have no agenda.

> *You can't be neutral about your own destiny. It's not just an intellectual destiny, but about the future of our children.*

But journalists know I'm a patriot and believe the Israeli story is great and should be told with all its nuances and variety of opinions.

If we expose the foreign press to these, I think, in the long run, we can improve the coverage Israeli gets in the media.

It kind of sounds like you do have an agenda.

I'm not evading the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict. I'm dealing with it on a regular basis. I'm saying, 'Here's Israel: right, left, Orthodox, non-Orthodox, rich, poor. Let's deal with it…' I guess I do have an agenda, but it's not political or institutional. It's simple: there's more to Israel than what we get on breaking news or on television. There's a richer view of Israel. The main thing lost in today's coverage of Israel is the warmth, energy, vitality and ingenuity of Israelis. This doesn't offset issues with the settlements or Gaza, it's just giving a more complete look at Israel rather than just what's seen through the narrow prism of war.

I try really hard to be balanced by bringing speakers from the right and the left, both Arabs and Jews… I have a goal to broaden people's views.

For instance, *Al Jazeera* is a member, as is Samer Shalabi [the first Palestinian chair of Israel's Foreign Press Association].

What kinds of special programs does JPC offer?

We're investing in journalism students. When we first opened, I brought a group of journalism students from the University of Miami, and this year we brought a group of journalism students from Northwestern. They were very impressed and went back to their campuses with a better understanding of how complex it is to cover Israel and the Middle East. We bring them for a week or so and offer rich programming with a journalistic focus. We let them meet different news organizations working here, Israeli and foreign; hear speakers, and have time for assignments.

I'm ready to bring more foreign journalism students, it's just a question of funds.

Another program we have is we host special missions of journalists who specialize in a certain area in which Israel has something big to say to the world… like the high-tech industry, science, film, literature or education.

In 2013, I brought science journalists from all over the world and exposed them to the richest program that showed the accomplishments of Israeli scientists… there were journalists from Japan, Colombia, Germany.

This year, I brought 20 film critics from around the world to cover the Jerusalem Film Festival. This upgraded the Jerusalem Film Festival to the level of other great international film festivals.

Do your members represent the full political spectrum?

Yes. Some people think we're too much to the left and some think we're not leftist enough, so I think we're somewhat in a good place.

For example, when [*New York Times* columnist] Thomas Friedman came to town, I invited him to the press club to speak for our members – 200 people wanted to come. But some Israeli journalists who are far to the right wrote complaint letters to the government press office saying, 'Look at Uri Dromi, bringing the leftist Thomas Friedman, who criticizes Israel.'

Another time, when I invited a diplomat who is far right and against a two-state solution, I got complaints from press club members who are leftists, saying, 'Why are you inviting a right-wing lunatic here?'

Is it possible for a journalist in Israel to be fairly neutral?

Definitely not. It's all a matter of interpretation. I write op-ed pieces for the *Miami Herald* and you can see I'm not neutral. I take sides, I'm critical of the government of Israel. You can't be neutral about your own destiny. It's not just an intellectual destiny, but about the future of our children.

How many members are there?

We already have 100-plus foreign press members, 100-plus Israeli journalists, 100 visiting journalists and 100 associates members – people like diplomats, PR professionals, retired journalists, etc. –who want to mingle with the press. Altogether, we have 400 members in just a year and a half of being open – not so bad!

What are club membership and visitor rates?

It's 200 shekels [about $50 US] a year for foreign and Israeli journalists and 300 shekels [$76] a year for an associate member. For a journalist who's just visiting, it's 100 shekels for a year.

Visiting journalists are happy to become members, because, as a member, you can walk into any press club in the world and get all benefits free of charge. We have a reciprocal arrangement with them, because we're a member of the International Association of Press Clubs and of the European Federation of Press Clubs.

If people come and they're nice people, we let them in.

And if they're not nice?

[chuckling] We kick them out. ■

The other side of the coin

Backstory

IRA ROBINSON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In December 1931, Rabbi Joshua Herschorn spoke in Montreal's "Romanian shul" and sparked a controversy. His sermon reacted to shocking news of riots by Polish students seeking to limit the number of Jewish students in their universities. Montreal Jews were even more shocked to hear that the rabbi had allegedly preached a sermon that stated that the riots were at least partially the Polish Jews' own fault!

The controversy began with the publication of a letter to Montreal's Yiddish newspaper *Keneder Adler* that alleged that Rabbi Herschorn had argued that the Polish students had a point in that Polish Jews did not financially support Polish universities. The newspaper's editor added a note supporting the allegations and asserting that this was merely one of many letters he had received on the subject.

The charges against Rabbi Herschorn were taken up by Montreal's Russian-Polish Sick Benefit Society that requested an investigation, demanded that the rabbi's salary be suspended, and called for a protest meeting. The rabbi's livelihood seemed in real jeopardy.

His supporters now entered the debate, asserting that Rabbi Herschorn had never justified the hooliganism of the Poles. The editor, Israel Rabinovich, was unconvinced. Given that the sermon's title was "The Other Side of the Coin", he wondered what the "other side" of an anti-Semitic pogrom could be?

The next stage of the controversy came when Rabbi Herschorn's synagogue held a public meeting that heard testimony asserting that the criticism the rabbi received was groundless. Isidore Popliger, the president of the congregation, attempted to discredit the testimony against his rabbi. He questioned the newspaper's accusations on the basis of a dubious letter. He denied that Rabbi Herschorn said that the Polish Jews "deserved what they got" and called it "a despicable lie."

Rabbi Herschorn gave his version of the affair. Certainly he did not justify anti-Jewish pogroms. What he had said was that the Jews needed to conduct themselves better in their relations with their non-Jewish neighbours. At this point, the rabbis in attendance convened a rabbinical court and declared him innocent of the charges against him. The meeting ended and the matter fell from the public agenda of Montreal Jewry.

One published source purports to give us the "gist" of Rabbi Herschorn's sermon. According to this summary, he began by comparing the situation of the Jews of Poland to that of the Jews in Montreal. He said that it was in the Jews' interest to have good relations with their fellow citizens and to support non-Jewish institutions from which Jews derive benefit. Thus McGill University has many Jewish students. But how many Jews contributed financially to McGill? Similarly Rabbi Herschorn deplored the fact that Jews didn't support the Royal Victoria and the Montreal General hospitals, even though Jews used these hospitals and got the same attention as Christian patients.

Rabbi Herschorn had intended to preach a provocative sermon, using the recent pogroms to rivet the attention of his congregants on their own situation. What he likely intended to be a secondary point spun out of control and required the skilled intervention of his congregation's president to get him out of trouble.

Rabbi Herschorn's sermon is remarkable. It attempted to take a stand on the Montreal Jewish community's relationship to the larger community that bucked a strong communal inward trend. Thus, for example, the Jewish community of Montreal was channeling its resources to build the Jewish General Hospital, for which the groundbreaking ceremony had taken place in August, 1931, while Rabbi Herschorn was advocating more Jewish engagement with the Protestant hospitals of Montreal.

Rabbi Herschorn's vision of a Jewish community increasingly engaged with the institutions of Anglo-Montreal constituted a bold attempt to influence his listeners' engagement with their society but didn't seem to reflect the direction of the Montreal Jewish community in the short run. In 1931 it was probably dismissed as optimistic, even utopian. However the situation illuminated by this controversy would not last. Economic progress and the forces of acculturation would ultimately lead to the contemporary prominent financial engagement of Montreal Jews in all the educational, medical, social, and cultural institutions of Montreal – just as Rabbi Herschorn had advocated. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

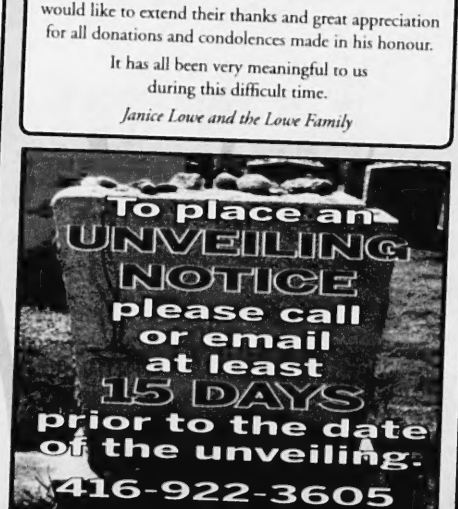
The family of the beloved

HARVEY LOWE ז"ל

would like to extend their thanks and great appreciation for all donations and condolences made in his honour.

It has all been very meaningful to us during this difficult time.

Janice Lowe and the Lowe Family



BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Tillie Webber	Dec 6/14	3560 Bathurst Street
Miriam Weisz	Dec 6/14	5935 Bathurst Street
Kerry Wasserman	Dec 8/14	42 Rodeo Drive
Grace Hillman	Dec 8/14	645 Castlefield Avenue
Marjorie Berman	Dec 9/14	1121 Steeles Ave. West
Aileen Fogle	Dec 8/14	3303 Don Mills Road
Eric Freeman	Dec 11/14	80 Antibes Drive
Sarlota (Shari) Majerovi	Dec 10/14	135 Antibes Drive
Fran Seligman (nee) Shap	Dec 11/14	645 Castlefield Avenue
Rose Lalonde	Dec 11/14	10 Medley Crescent
Murray Wolfman	Dec 14/14	205 Wynford Drive
Betty Verk	Dec 14/14	2 Neptune Drive
Orval Samuel Fruitman	Dec 15/14	

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Kaganovsky, Mariya	Nov. 27, 2014	Private
King, Ruth	Nov. 28, 2014	983 Burnham St.
Day, Reva	Nov. 28, 2014	2 Neptune Dr.
Freilich, Katie	Nov. 29, 2014	1500 Steeles Ave W.
Nightingale, Irving	Nov. 29, 2014	1131 Steeles Ave W.
Lash, Albert	Nov. 29, 2014	7460 Bathurst St
Yevdaev, Israel	Nov. 30, 2014	Private
Aizenchtat, William	Nov. 30, 2014	Private
Beck, Ernie	Dec. 1, 2014	1121 Steeles Ave W
Rotter, Lola	Dec. 1, 2014	40 Palm Dr
Ilutowicz, Abe Henry	Dec. 1, 2014	40 Penwick Cres
Shofman, Gennady	Dec. 1, 2014	205 Hilda Ave
Weisz, Andrei Mordechai	Dec. 2, 2014	19 Rean Dr
Douglas, Jack	Dec. 2, 2014	38 Julia St.
Rabins, Shelley	Dec. 3, 2014	90 Fisherville Rd.
Alexandrova, Faina	Dec. 3, 2014	Private
Green, Patrick Albert	Dec. 3, 2014	1 Chedington Place
Sporer, Edith	Dec. 3, 2014	63 Waterloo Ave
Grossman, David Saul	Dec. 3, 2014	784 Centre St
Kreissin, Semen	Dec. 3, 2014	4455 Bathurst St
Roberts, Mark	Dec. 3, 2014	3181 Bayview Ave
Kingsbury, Clive Mark	Dec. 3, 2014	39 Winding Lane
Saiger, Percy	Dec. 3, 2014	3560 Bathurst St.
Rubenchik, Feyga	Dec. 4, 2014	5935 Bathurst St
Feleki, Cornelia	Dec. 4,2014	100 Antibes Dr
Ackerman, Sonya N.	Dec. 4, 2014	3670 West 5th Ave
Aronovich, Gertruda	Dec. 6, 2014	541 Finch Ave W
Apter, Leon	Dec. 7, 2014	7 Townsgate Dr
Freid, Eddie	Dec. 7, 2014	4415 Bathurst St
Posluns, Elaine	Dec. 8, 2014	409 Rushton Rd
Stoliar, Minta	Dec. 9, 2014	541 Finch Ave W.
Sweet, Samuel Percy	Dec. 10, 2014	2 Covington Rd
Cynamon, Esther	Dec. 9, 2014	3560 Bathurst St.
Title, Irwin	Dec. 10, 2014	484 Steeles Ave
Bazik, Hanna	Dec. 11, 2014	3560 Bathurst St.
Sekiritsky, Isak	Dec. 11, 2014	21 Pinewood Dr.
Levine, Efim Gregori	Dec. 12, 2014	5430 Yonge St.
Basser, Wilma Vivian	Dec. 12, 2014	31 Redmount Rd.
Halperin, Sadie	Dec. 14, 2014	324 Simonston Blvd
Genesove, Celia	Dec. 15, 2014	136 Hillmount Ave
Persofsky, Molly Ruth	Dec. 15, 2014	63 Bernick Rd.
Schwartz, Dora	Dec. 15, 2014	131 Beecroft Rd.

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